

THE LIFE OF
A MOGUL PRINCESS





PORTRAIT OF A PRINCESS
Probably of the Mogul Imperial House

THE LIFE OF ~~AN~~ A MOGUL PRINCESS

JAHĀNARĀ BEGAM

DAUGHTER OF SHĀHJAHĀN

13581

By

ANDREA BUTENSCHÖN



With an Introduction by

LAURENCE BINYON

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TO
INDIA

*At the end of the book some explanations
and notes are to be found*

THE illustrations are meant to throw light on certain points in the book and to convey to the reader some idea of the surroundings and the atmosphere in which the Princess moved. For the permission to borrow some of these illustrations from the works of others, I have to thank Doctor Fredrik M. Martin, Professor E. B. Havell, Director Percy Browne (the Government School of Art, Calcutta) and the Clarendon Press, the Archæological Survey of India through the India Office and Mrs. Stella Kramrisch (" Indische Kunst "). Also I beg to thank Doctor Ananda Coomaraswamy (the Director of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston) for getting me several photographs of miniatures, belonging to his collection, and Mr. Chester Beatty for the same kind of permission. I must also thank the Verlag Ernst Wasmuth.



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PREFACE

BY LAURENCE BINYON

Is there in all history a chapter more full of fascinating interest, from every angle of view, than the story of the Moguls in India? If it were merely a story of invasion and conquest, it would be little memorable. But it is much more than that. It begins as superb adventure, it goes on to the solving of complex problems of government, of the reconciliation of races and religions; it culminates in the gradual consolidation of an empire. At the same time it is the story of a succession of vivid and brilliant personalities: Bābur, the adventurous soldier, who swam every river he had to cross, lover of poetry and a poet himself, with his passion for flowers and gardens; Akbar, one of the greatest of all rulers, a man of extraordinary physical strength and courage, a mighty hunter, with sudden fits of tenderness to all creatures, illiterate, yet a lover of literature, deeply interested in religion and finding good in various faiths, far-sighted in resolve to identify himself with the country he had conquered and

sharing his government with the Indians ; Nūr Jahān, the strong, ambitious wife of Jahāngīr, who in all but name ruled the empire for her pleasure-loving husband ; Shāh Jahān, the magnificent, who built the Tāj Mahāl as a tomb for his beloved. Dārā Shakōh, deeply versed in religion and philosophy, but charming and frank in manner ; and Aurangzeb, his brother, the superb dissimulator, the great captain and austere fanatic, by whom he met his death.

Simply from the human point of view, as drama on a great scale and a conspicuous stage, this period is of an interest unsurpassed. And no period is more vividly presented to us, alike in personal memoirs written by some of the chief characters or by Europeans who were in India at the time, and in pictorial record.

The story culminates in the closing years of Shāh Jahān, when his sons whom he had sent to rule over distant provinces, for fear of their ambition, rose against him and against each other. It is into the heart of this most dramatic crisis that Madame Butenschön takes us. In choosing the tragic story of Jahānarā, the elder daughter of Shāh Jahān, she is able to picture to us the succession of terrible events from within. Unable to take an active part in them, Jahānarā witnesses all. Proud of her lineage, proud of the splendid

achievements of her family, she endures to see her father imprisoned, her beloved brother Dārā brought to ignominy and death ; the House of Timūr, divided against itself, seems to be falling in ruins. And Jahānarā, in the midst of these calamities, suffers most from her own secret and unhappy passion. Madame Butenschön communicates to her readers the storms that shake the heart of her heroine, sensitive alike to the beauty of things and persons, to physical and mental agitation, to the glory of the race from which she comes and the ancient grandeurs of the land she now belongs to. Above all we are made to feel, now at a distance, now near, now imminent, the terrible power of a cold, unscrupulous will, as Aurangzeb, throwing off the mask of subservience just at the crucial moment, advances, step by step, over the bodies of his brothers, to seize his father's throne. It is Aurangzeb who dominates the story. Dryden wrote a play on Aurangzeb while that monarch was still alive ; but readers of that play get from it little hint of the real story which throbs and burns in the pages of this book.

LAURENCE BINYON.



JAHĀNARĀ BEGAM

It is He who lives, who endures.

Let no rich canopy cover my grave: this grass is the best covering for the tomb of the poor in spirit. The humble, the transitory Jahānarā, the disciple of the holy men of Chisht, the daughter of the Emperor, Shāh Jahān. . . .

A.H. 1092. (A.D. 1680.)

THIS tomb inscription was once interpreted to me in Delhi as I stood contemplating a simple marble sepulchre with its ever-green grass covering and its single inlaid stone—a jade—akin to a light green blade of grass. Here she rested, the daughter of the mighty Mogul Emperor Shāhjahān! Her mother, the idolised consort of the Emperor, slept by his side in the grave-palace of Tāj Mahāl. How could it be that the daughter had only simple grass to cover her tomb?

The thought haunted me. I began to wonder at this Mogul dynasty—issuing from Chengiz Khan and Timūr Lenk—and I made up my mind to try and get to know something more about that India which Bābur conquered, which Akbar built up

and which under Shāhjahān arrived at the height of its power and material prosperity. Many a beautiful building survives from that time, looking as if it had been built but yesterday. How came then this mighty kingdom to fall into ruins ?

As I searched for knowledge there fell into my hands a manuscript, found behind a marble slab on the point of breaking, in the Jessamine tower of the fort in Agra.

And now I leave the word to the Princess Jahānarā herself, who will answer my question.



RAJPUT WARRIOR



I

The manuscript was in Persian. On its cover was written :

What are we but shreds of the past, all we that have not sown seeds for growth in the future? Such a shred I dedicate my thoughts to oblivion.

Jahānarā. Imprisoned in the fortress of Agra.

Zul Qa'dah. A.H. 1069. (July, A.D. 1659.)

Oh Death! You have adopted human form and stare into my face with your lifeless eyes. Your cold breath chills my temples and my last hope withers. Dārā's head fallen! Sent to his father and to me in our prison. Unhappy Hindustan! All the blood that soaked your soil could not avail to weld you together into one powerful kingdom, whose name echoed all over the world like the clangour of flutes and cymbals! Why? I tear the hairs from my head, tear the rubies from my neck, but the answer I find not.

It darkens before my eyes. I look into myself. Far back in time.

I see one army after the other surge up and down the mountains and plains of Hindustan like big waves in a storm. The storm ravages the country,

sweeping away gold and treasures, hoarded during centuries.

Then comes peace. Temples and palaces rise from the soil in splendour like the abodes of gods. Till the next storm. Hosts of warriors and blood.

Jamna washes the foot of the fortress. Is not the river also turned into blood—a stream of blood, accumulated throughout the ages, and reaching the sea it tinges even the ocean with red ; red foam dashes against the stars. Purple clouds float above our heads ; they have sucked up all the red from earth and water, and the rain that falls is blood.

It is not more than a year ago, before we were imprisoned, that Dārā went out to meet Aurangzeb. Still I hear the clamour of the great army winding like a golden serpent across the plain towards the verge of the horizon. I hear the tramping of thousands and thousands of horses and of the many elephants and camels. Above the glittering lances of the Rajputs sat Dārā on his elephant Fath Jang as on a tower, and like a beacon he could be seen all over the army.

Alas ! Alas ! When the message of defeat reached Agra, I wept as I weep over thee, my brother, and over him whose name I dare not mention. In thy heart lay thy greatness, Dārā,

and the footsteps of Akbar wouldst thou follow on the way to the unity of Hind. The same law for all, as the same God rules over all. But thy weakness and thy pride ruined thee, and strength lay on the other side, with the fākir. How I hate thee, white serpent, ruler of us all, the Aurangzeb! Thy heart is as hard as thy intelligence is bright, and thy dominating thought is this—I alone shall rule, far into the souls of men! Thine eye smiles benignly when thy foot crushes to death everyone that stands in thy way. Truly indeed did the wandering sage prophesy—when thou wast only a child—that *thou* wouldst be the destroyer of the race of Timūr.

✓ Again I hear the tramp of elephants and horses, but this time the host is smaller—Dārā comes back to Delhi. Persecuted, deceived. Not with naked swords did they fight him, but with dark stratagems. He, who only a year ago sat before the throne of my father on a golden chair, is now brought into the streets of Delhi seated on a miserable elephant without trappings—my brother is clad in rags and fettered like the meanest of slaves. The people wring their hands at such a sight; the men murmur maledictions in their beards and the women melt in tears, but none dares complain aloud. ✕

Afterwards they sing softly among themselves
the dirge :

In turn Fate changed the Fākīr's cowl
and beheaded the Prince in passing.

Shivering I write these words by a dim candle-
light in the fortress of Agra. My inmost thoughts
I have kept secret ; how could I otherwise have
lived ! I am only a woman. But here in the
lonely night I sing out my sorrow to oblivion—
yes, to oblivion I will confide the tale of my life.
The tale and the sorrow.

✓ Dear to me was my brother Dārā : ever was I
true to him. And he was true to the great dream
of our glorious ancestor, Akbar : may the sun of
eternity shine on his path through the regions of
infinity ! Never was his sight dazzled by all the
gold and precious stones of Hind, hoarded up in
dark vaults, but all that men had divined and
applied their thoughts to during millenniums were
to him a holy treasure that he felt chosen to lift
into the light. And he dreamt that Hind should
get back her spirit of old, not a slave-girl any longer
to foreign lords, but a queen in that majestic
beauty of soul which brought her near unto God.

On the other side of the Jamna stands Tāj
Mahāl. In the moonlight the dome becomes a
single big pearl, white as the wing of the angel of
death. The Alkoran is read within its walls in a

soft voice to my mother, long since laid to sleep in the vault below. But no longer now does she listen to poems about paradise ! ✓ By her side is laid the bloody head of Dārā ; and a shiver runs through her whitened bones—does she feel in her slumber that when the head of her son was cut off the crown over an idea crumbled into dust forever ? ✕

When the sun rises red above Tāj Mahāl the white dome is no longer a big pearl—it has become a huge drop of blood.

✓ Woe unto thee, Aurangzeb ! A man struck by Fate thou didst crush under foot ; and, calling him godless, thou didst take his life ! ✕

✓ Why gavest thou not me poppy-juice to drink as to thy youngest brother and thy nephews in the fortress of Gwalior, that my reason might get blunted and my thoughts lose their power to fathom the depth of despair ! ✕

But now, still living and thinking, I whisper to thee through the darkness, and my voice shall reach thee with doleful messages from the world of the dead, for to-night a secret power rules my senses . . .

Dark shadows creep along the ground. Thou seest them not perchance, but I see them. The dark shadows are like bent backs : all of a sudden they rise together and become clouds in a tempest

—lightnings glare, fires consume, the whole country is devastated. From the bent backs thy yoke will fall, and Akbar's dream of a Hind united under the sceptre of the House of Timūr, will be scared out of the world through a ghastly vision.

I foretell thee, thou strong one who fearest God but lovest him not—that thou wilt be feared but never loved. When Akbar gave away a coin of copper, it became gold ; but what thou givest is often turned into thistles. He united, and thou shalt tear asunder. I say unto thee, Aurangzeb, thou master of perfidy, that thou shalt never forget the sin against thy old father for a moment during all thy life. Thine own shadow shall fall across thy path wherever thou goest, leading thee astray. And no text out of the Korān will be able to release thee from the enchantment of thine own shadow.

Hind has been a harlot to the conqueror, she has been violated and plundered in passion and hate. Had she been uplifted through an imperial thought she could have become a strong mother to all her children. The peacock throne may shine in all its glory in Delhi, it does not rest in safety on its diamonds and emeralds, but it attracts desire as the magnet attracts steel.

A cold gust of wind sweeps in from the west and I shiver. It is the herald of storm, of seas of

blood. The high rulers of the earth trace their laws on the ground, and the red waves wash them out. In the night I hear how all Delhi is one cry of horror as in the days of Timūr, and once more the storm rages at Pānipat . . .

Only the dead have peace. Or not even they? Are not tombs dishonoured on account of their treasures! Therefore will I not lie under marble and precious stones, the grass alone shall be my covering, and when it is trampled down it grows up anew.

Because God cares for the poor.

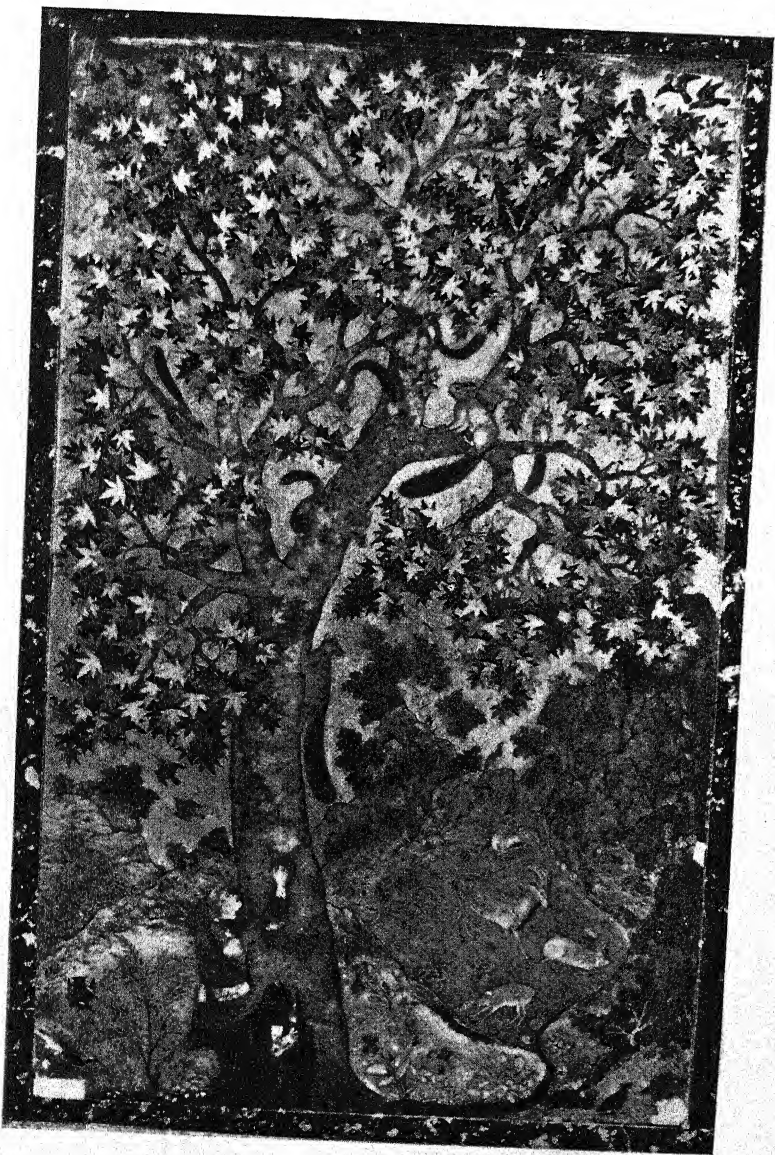
II

Stray notes in some half-torn pages indicate that some time has elapsed before we are again able to follow the manuscript consecutively. . . .

As the sun sinks the wind rises and breathes sweet fragrance of flowers over the earth. And here in Anguri Bāgh every flower evokes some memory.

The rhododendrons glow red like torches on the way to a banqueting hall : how oft did I not let them blaze in the wedding garland when my brothers were married ! The violet-grey heliotropes wave in the breeze and their delicate aroma fills me with sadness : I live in years gone by.

All instruments are hushed in the Divān-i-Am, but the evening is full of melody. It is as if Dulerā's song blended with the perfume from the deep scarlet roses, and in trembling rhythm my thoughts are wafted far above the fortress walls into the land of my desire. I called Dulerā bridegroom and in his arms I mistook the intoxication of the moment for happiness, but his song led me into realms my foot had never touched. And



MOGUL MINIATURE
(*School of Jahāngīr*)



although the memory of his countenance has faded, still I hear an echo of the song . . .

✓ In my palace in Delhi I lived like the dayfly in the gardens of Shālimar, which seeks intoxication in the cups of flowers in order to forget how every second brings it nearer to the evening—nearer darkness and death. Glittering in turquoise and emerald, with gold dust on its wings, it dances along the sunbeam as on a sky-ladder, aspiring to reach the sun, to glitter for ever and not die when the evening star is lit. ✓

So I trembled every day with fear lest my beauty should pass ere I had reached the gates of my Dream, not Begam Sāhib any longer with the bridegroom in mirth, but queen of a heart to the end of my days. And I drank of the cup Fate offered me, dizzy but always athirst.

Like the orchid over there that attracts a golden ring round its frail leaves as the sun sinks, so memory lends an aureole to the head of my Rājā.

I can see him now as the first time I saw him—then I was young—making obeisance to my father at a darbar in the Divān-i-Am. The cavalry has marched past, the cymbals and flutes are no longer heard: there is silence. I am standing at a lattice-window of the Mahāl. As he approaches the throne with soundless steps, I feel that the blood vanishes from my face. Is it Nāla, the king

of Nishada, who has come back to earth ? There is a gleam in his eye as though he saw a vision far away ; no Brahmin has a more dignified bearing, his whole demeanour bespeaks the race from which he comes, the race that should have ruled Hind. When the bards strike their vinas for honour or for death, how he spurs his black stallion into the fight ! Like Damayanti, who chose the hero Nāla for her lord before any of the gods, so I made homage to this Rajput in my heart as to no-one else before or after. At first sight he became the lord of my soul—and remains so still.

The dayfly would dance through the sun, and I would make my way into eternity, like Sāvitri bid defiance to the law of Death, and on the other shore, where there is no fear, follow my king through the illimitable land of my desire.

✓ My brother Aurangzeb has forbidden music, they say. The musicians have buried their instruments with funeral ceremonies. But no imperial command can bury the song in my heart.

Hard as a wall Fate has stood against me. The daughter of the Mogul emperors might not be given in marriage, this was Akbar's law. For his country's sake he made us victims. ♣

But I know of a palace on a hill far away above a lake. The still waters below reflect white marble turrets and golden gates—silence reigns

above as in the deep. Because *he* is no more. But by his side I would have held a court renowned all over the empire. Not because the Mogul princess excited the jealousy of paradise at her banquets, where the dance swayed gently over the cool marble floor, where the jewelled goblet was so deep that thoughts were drowned in the wine from Kabul and Kashmir—no, here they should have flowed together into one, the two oceans, Islām and Indian wisdom. The dream of my brother Dārā! Out of the vineyards of mysticism sūfis, yogis and pandits should have produced the costliest of wines and poured it into the sparkling chalice of poetry and eloquence. As in the time of Akbar . . .

✓ Listen how the waters murmur in the brook that runs through Anguri Bāgh and how all the leaves rustle. To my ear these soft, plaintive sounds become the royal orchestra in Delhi. Through the spring I wander back in years to my garden-house by the canal of Firoz Shāh. The strains from oböes, the clashing of cymbals are wafted to me by the wind that has passed over the Jamna and is laden with smoke from the funeral piles—those that are lit by the river at eventide—and the orchestra sounds like the wailing of a people over approaching fatal evil.

Not yet had my brother Shāh Shujā become

Viceroy of Bengal, not yet had he seen the long procession of innumerable cobras, which for hours streamed across the fields near his capital and disappeared from view. So he had not yet heard from greedy astrologers that the little white serpent, which rode on the head of a big dark cobra, was the sign of his future dignity as emperor. Not yet had brother-feud flamed up, but sparks began to fly about within the palace walls. In mirth and revelry the days passed by, as when the sun in its setting lights up a festive market-place . . .

And in my garden-house I wait and wait. Will he not come soon, my Rakhibandbhai, he that will side with me, when all swords are whetted in Hindustan? No woman has given him a richer bracelet than that which to-day bound him to be my warrior-brother. . . .

When the first star was lit in the highest heaven and the blushing sky of sunset had caught it in its rosy mist, he came. Hearing him approach, I knelt down.

I hear his voice greeting me behind the screen that separated us like the wall of Fate. And I rise and greet him as if he were king of all the world. In his own language I thank him for coming.

“Do you thank me, Pādshāh Begam?”

His glance has the glow of the sun and the

depth of the ocean. Through the trellis-work of the screen I can see his white turban against the evening sky which has turned to gold. Higher than of yore he carries his head—many a victory has he gained.

“As long as a rajput exists in Udaipur the oil shall never dry up in the lamp that hangs in the sanctuary, built in honour of your august father, when he came to us warriors in his affliction. As long as I can move an arm my sword shall be wielded in your honour, Princess!”

I laid my lips very near the trellis-work. “But your own honour,” I whispered.

Now the smile vanished from his lips. “Hind is condemned. We warriors and the priests condemned her long ago. Do you remember, Pādshāh Begam, you who yourself carry the blood of Rājasthan in your veins—the legend of Sāmar Sī of Mewar, as he went to do battle in defence of the King of Ajmir and Delhi against Muhammed of Gor? In the depth of night he saw a beautiful face, a veil fell from his eyes and he heard the prophecy—Hindustan should be lost with him. Delhi fell, it is now many hundred years ago, and the glory of Hind vanished, because we Rajputs, who should have protected its holy mountains and rivers against its enemies, we fought between ourselves for power.”

“ You fought about Sanjōgin, the princess of Kanauj. And do you remember, Mahārāja, what she said to her lord, the king of Delhi, as he went out to the battle ? ‘ To die well is to live for ever. Think not of your own self but of immortality ; cut your enemy into two, and I shall be your other half hereafter ! ’ And when he fell and she mounted the funeral pyre she said : ‘ I shall see him again in the regions of the sun, but never more in Yoginipur.’ Is it your belief that death can unite even that which never was united here on earth ? ”

All my longing throughout the years was summoned up in this one eager question.

Then his face was lit up by a smile so full of light that it was in itself the answer.

“ It is not the flames of the funeral pyre that purify the soul ! But as the enigma is solved only through the one right word, so the heart is liberated out of Samsāra’s enchantment only by the other heart, to which it belongs, here or hereafter on its way to God ! ”

These words flashed on me as a revelation of bliss, and I crept near the screen, as if it had been the gate that shut me out from happiness. Ah, why did I not let it fall like the fortress wall before the feet of the conqueror ! Instead I shivered with joy and sought for words to conceal my

bashfulness. And still he stood with the wonderful smile on his lips.

Who can change the writing that Fate has inscribed upon our forehead? Who can change the course of the stars?

The lamps were already lit, and the heavens revealed their glistening treasure. The music from Divān-i-Am had ceased; only the water whispered outside. And we still talked—softly, so that no one should hear.

We talked of the future. Would he be my father, the emperor, and Dārā faithful unto death?

“At one time there was a Lord in Hind, the great Akbar,” such was his answer, “whose realm extended from one end of the country to the other, and a native king over a small piece of the country, Pertap, lord of many swords, he who sat on the throne of Sāmar Sī in Mewar and was his descendant. Akbar—may his name be honoured throughout all time!—would conquer, unite and fuse together; Pertap would defend, would mark out and keep his own, his inheritance from centuries past—blessed be his memory as long as one of the warrior caste still breathes in Hind”

The evening breeze stole softly in through the garden-house bringing the scent of the tuberose from a far-away corner of the rose-garden—and

memories of my childhood. For it was at sunset that the old rajputnī in the Mahāl told me so many a story from Mewar, from Būndi and from Amber, until I forgot who I was and believed myself to be one of Hind's own royal children.

Eagerly I say : " My father's grandfather had also a grandfather of great renown, Bābur ; Pertap was the grandson of Sanga, the most powerful of Bābur's enemies. When he was driven away from his kingdom in Ferghana Bābur, the descendant of Timūr, won with a small army the throne of Ibrahīm Lodi in Delhi, and with a small army he went against all the princes of Rājasthan massed together. Do you remember, Mahārāja, how Sultan Bābur in a moment of threatening danger caused his silver and gold vessels to be broken, poured out all the wine on the ground and made a vow against drinking, purifying his mind ? Three hundred of his men followed his example, and the whole army, which had been filled with despondency, then made a vow on the Korān to gain victory or die. With the war-cry, ' Allāh is great ' they swept on against a superior force. But Sanga waited—slept over his day of victory—and Bābur was hailed as conqueror. Why did Sanga wait ? "

Through the screening trellis-work his eye flashed towards mine. " We people of Hind let

Fate stare us in the face till we are blinded. Perhaps the beautiful vision was seen for the last time in Chitor, when Mewar had attained its height of power, to tell Rāna Sanga how a traitor should bring shame upon his name—a champion he of kingly victories, who on his body could show the marks of eighty wounds, one-armed, one-eyed—it was not fear that kept Rāna Sanga back ! ”

The Rāja laughed in a voice deep and full of defiance like the tide when it dashes against the stones on the shore.

I brought my face very near the screen, so that my eyes should meet his, and remembering Chand, the great bard of Rājasthan, I said :

“He threw life aside as a vain dream,
and through the waves of battle
he went on the pilgrimage of the sword.

No-one suspects a Rajput of fear, lord. But we spoke of Akbar and Pertap ” . . .

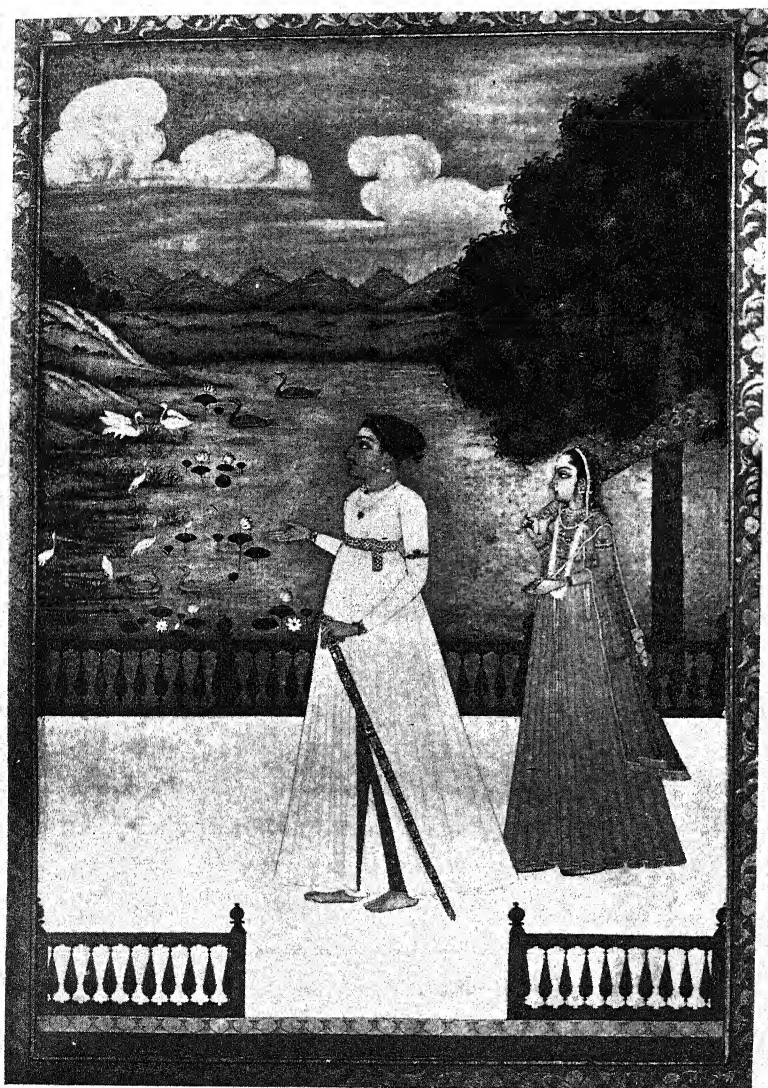
And he continued : “ Alone Pertap stood with his chiefs against Akbar, when all the other princes of Rājasthan without a single exception had become the vassals of the emperor and were called the support and ornament of the throne in Delhi ! Strife raged for a quarter of a century, when the Aravalli mountains had become the fortress of Rāna Pertap and the forest his palace. He slept on straw and ate his meal on leaves to

regain his country with Chitor, the wall-encircled, the seat of Bappa Rāwul, his ancestor, which had been so relentlessly plundered by Akbar, that they sing of 'the sin of the Sakka of Chitor' to this very day.

Now the lights shone no longer from the high candlesticks in the sanctuary of the great Mother, no longer sounded the kettle-drums which had announced to the country for miles around when their king went in or out of his castle—and since the chieftain of Salūmbra fell by the Gate of the Sun, it has not been thrown open to an independent sovereign of the race of Bappa Rāwul . . .

At last a message came to the court that Pertap wished to negotiate. Everything could he endure, but not to see his children hunger in the wilderness.

Then they grew pale, the vassals of Akbar, the princes of Rājasthan, for in Pertap the honour of their race still lived without a blemish. And Pirthvi Rāj, the poet-warrior, wrote a poem, 'The hope of the Hindu rests on the Hindu,' which goaded Pertap on to greater deeds of victory than before. Free as he had lived he died, but outside the walls of Chitor. His son it was who, forced by the enemy, lowered the purple banner—drenched in blood throughout centuries—before Prince Kurram, now Shāhjahān, the lord over us all, and his ashes were carried in through the Gate of the



RAJPUT MINIATURE FROM THE TIME OF THE MOGULS



Sun, he the last King of Chitor not called a *vassal*
... .”

Vassal ! The word echoed through the pillared hall of the garden-house, but it did not resound like the voice of the *rāja*. It seemed like the answer from another world.

“And now, most noble sister,” continued the *rāja*, and his voice seemed more distant, “the women bring as before offerings to their divinities—to Krishna and to *Rāma*, to Mahavīra and to Gouri—and the *kokila* sings its song of spring in the wild peachtrees that have shot up amongst the ruins of Queen Padmanī’s palace. Peacocks wander over fallen bastions where they spread their gaudy plumage over destruction, rose-coloured parrots chatter in gay clusters on broken temple roofs. Whole, as when it rose in a long past heroic age, *Rāna Kūmbho*’s pillar of victory towers against the white spring clouds : it tells nothing of the ravage of Chitor, it only bears witness to triumph. At its foot the *chāran* sings softly to his lute about Putta and Jaimal, the last defenders of the town against Akbar, sings of the mother and the young bride of Putta, who with the sword at their side walked at the head of the warriors to kindle their courage and were the first to fall, sings of all the *jauhar* of Chitor—of those thousands of women who, goaded on by their men,

leaped into the flames rather than fall into the hands of the enemy—of the beautiful Queen Padmanī, who during the siege of Alauddīn walked last of the long procession of all the women who in a subterranean cave were consecrated to fire. So all lives and all dies.

But far away in the woods sits the wise man and thinks. The veil has fallen from his eyes and he knows that all we suffer and struggle and die for is nothing, Oh Princess! He has seen the One and after that sees nothing more. All tones sing to him in one tone, all colours melt together into one great light. A flash from it has penetrated his soul, and it is he who sees 'the majesty of the self through the tranquillity of the senses.' It is he who is the true emperor of Hind!

This Akbar knew. Even if he took altars from the temple in Eklinga and made of them supports for the Korān in the mosques, he chose the place for his own worship under moon and stars, and in this vast temple he let every soul seek its way to its own altar. Even if he took us with the sword still he, the great foreigner, opened the door for us to our own homes. Like the divine heroes of old there seemed to stream from him a superhuman power, as well when he spurred his horse through the strongest current in the stream as when he—wise in his clemency—elevated the

Hindu to the same rank as the Moslem in his country.

With Pertap the Rajput lost the last remnant of his freedom, through Akbar he gained a new conception of the glory of Hind. And as long as something of Akbar's spirit lives in the house of Timūr it will be the emblem for us warriors to follow who still carry in our veins a drop of the same blood that flowed in the veins of Pertap. Therefore I swear by this sword, which my ancestors lifted in the combat, to lay down my life for you, Princess, for the Emperor and for Prince Dārā " . . .

He swung his sword aloft. It flashed round his head like a halo.

"And Hind can wait—through millenniums—for its day. For once this day must also dawn . . ."

Many a light had been extinguished, many a star was lit, and I sat alone on my terrace above the running water, where the tamarind stood by the shore and stretched its foliage high above my head.

Now he was gone, but I felt his presence everywhere in the dark blue night, as its coolness soothingly caressed my burning limbs. Laburnum and amaranth grew on my terrace ; by the light

of a lantern I made a wreath of them, for he was clad in white with a gold-stitched belt round his waist. As the spring-tide swells or sinks at the command of its lord, the moon, so I lived and breathed in one single thought. The thought of my Rakhibandbhai.

Had the heavens been so near me before ? Now the world above became a roof of clearest sapphire over the earth, which was turned into a banqueting hall, now all stars shone in chandeliers lit for me, and the water's murmuring was the music of harps and flutes. It invited the whole world to take part in my great joy. For to-night would I hold my svayamvara.

And I saw how all the princes and nobles of my father's court assembled in the Divān-i-Am as I sat by the side of my father on his jewelled throne.

Last of all in the throng of the great my rājā walks in, passes on with a noiseless step, carrying his head as high as the first time I saw him, like the moon who makes all stars turn pale when it casts its light abroad in the heavens. And I rise and reach him my laburnum-wreath.

There goes a whisper, as when leaves rustle in the wind, through my father's court, and his name is voiced throughout Delhi ; but I only see two eyes deep as the sea, warm as the sun, and I know that now I have found him whom I have always

sought, the guide who can teach me everything and whom I may follow for ever. For as a day without sun is woman without a husband.

So I dreamt on my terrace, and the fire-flies danced around me like torches on a wedding-day. Does not Shaikh Ibn-ul-Arābi explain how men through their will-power can turn dreams into reality? I would write a letter to my brother knight in which the words, skilfully chosen—like sharply cut diamonds glimmering under silken gauze—should reveal to him my secret, that if Dārā gained victory over his brothers his power would be strong enough to pass by Akbar's law and give away his sister's hand, and the sister's power over her brother would be so great that she could make her own choice. I would write about Sīta's words to Rāma, when he retreats to the woods—if the husband stands in a palace, in a war-chariot belonging to the gods, or if he walks in the air, still the shadow of his foot is the refuge of his wife, and if clouds of suffocating dust rise from the road on which they walk together, they become to her like powder of the sweet-smelling sandalwood.

I would write—but now I saw how the night turned red; it was the sun who had already risen from the sea, and in my lap the wreath had withered; the sun it was who rose over my new day which should last until death. For my heart

was transformed. It did not obey my own voice any longer ; another voice called. My whole being had melted into his, and through him I felt at one with all living things. My soul was flooded with light, between time and eternity all limits were blotted out, and doors to hidden mysteries seemed open . . .

The morning sky drew my thoughts towards immensity ; in the limpid ocean of air the fairy bluebirds circled as though they would measure out space ; the mymahn perched on the marble parapet, warbling its song of dawn, and the newly awakened roses breathed out their perfume as an offering of incense to the sun.

Then I heard the tramp of many camels on the other side of Firoz Shāh's canal ; a caravan set out early to reach its day's goal before nightfall. A Persian song ran through the dawn ; it was the love-song of the Abu-Said :

I wouldst answer thy voice didst thou call me, though over my
body lay
heavy the earth of the grave-yard, and my bones were crumbled
away.

The dark was coming on and I left Anguri Bāgh for the Jessamine Tower with its lamps. Here I can write undisturbed, no steps patter about, no



MOGUL MINIATURE

voices, reminding of the present, penetrate into the past, into my real life.

My father has called for me, because my brother Aurangzeb has condescended to send him elephants and tigers to divert him in his imprisonment. My poor father ! But to-night I cannot come, his wives and his slave-girls must keep him company without me. For my old sorrow burns in my heart, and I must tell my own story to myself as to an unknown friend. I will write till I come to an end, but the end I will never reach . . .

As I had proposed that night on the terrace I wrote to the rāja the following day. When my nazir brought me his answer I immediately ordered a conveyance to bring me a good way out of Delhi to an ancient mosque, which stands like a half-ruined fortress on the edge of the wood. There I knew was peace. Trembling with anticipation I mounted the broken steps ; the strong aroma of ambra from the jungle intoxicated me. A green magpie sat on the wall : it greeted me with a hoarse voice. Close by the entrance porch on the temple-yard sat a yogi on his antelope skin with half a cocoanut shell and the staff beside him ; with his white turban he looked like a rishi of old, and softly he read to himself out of the Hindu funeral ritual : " Foolish he who seeks permanence in the human state, frail as the stem of the sycamore,

transient as the foam of the sea." He was blind. Some gold coins I let fall in his beggar-bowl and fancied he would see what would befall me in the future.

"Take your gold back, mother," said the yogi, as from a distance, and lifted the cocoanut shell towards me. "Your soul is more than happiness. Why do you seek happiness?"

But the words died on my lips, and the man got up and went. I had let fall the gold coins before his feet. Happiness! Oh, how my soul yearned for it . . .

On the edge of the well I read the letter. The noble spirit of a man breathed through every word, but also the simplicity of a child. Hail to thee, oh King! For thou didst rejoice over thy sister. And great was thy goodness, it lit a fire in my heart—the whole world seemed to be sunk in prayer. Devī didst thou call me, and write, that had I been a Sanjōgin thou wouldst have marched to my Kanauj like Prithvi Rāja. The whole world became a garden of roses. Thou didst remind me of Sanjōgin's words to her lord: "We women are the lakes, ye men are the swans; what are ye far away from our bosom?"

Thy letter had captivated me. I bent my head, for had not a crown of blessings been laid on it? Thus adorned I left the temple-yard.

And my journey back was akin to a triumphal procession. I sat on the scarlet cloth of the litter, hanging between my two camels, who with their soft movements quicker than ever strode along the road. The birds sang to me alone, the herons, who wandered about in the marshes, greeted me with their long slender necks ; everything that flew in the air or crawled on the ground knew about my happiness. Above the long row of cactus following the road, between the coral red ramblers in the trees, I saw how the plains stretched miles around like a sea without shore ; far away it was as if the sky had let fall a spiderweb in its own azure colour over the green of early spring.

And out there, in the blue haze, I would build a Hazar Minār, a palace holding a thousand minarets with a road between Palmyra palms stretching out towards the endless.

✓ When I was conveyed through Chandni Chauk it was time for darbar, and between the rows of trees on both sides of the broad street with its canal there was a crowd of people clad as for a feast, and of elephants and young bulls in their best trappings. An odour of saffron and musk, of aloes and sandalwood floats in the air, jewels glisten from within the shops beneath the arcades, little bells ring from the collars of the animals, and there is a clank of brass ornaments from the

ankles and wrists of the women in the street. Multicoloured kites fly high above the tops of the houses : up there veiled heads throng together and black eyes outshine diamonds and sapphires.

Had there ever been such a happy day ? Even the poor seem to rejoice. What do we then possess more than they ? The copper vessel on the head of the woman carrying water gleams as brightly in the sun as the topaz in the turban of the Pādishāh, and her teeth are as white as the pearl necklace round my throat.

✓ Beautiful is Shāhjahānabad, and here will I build a Sarāi, large and fine like no other hostelry in Hindustan. The wanderer who enters its courts will be restored in body and soul, and my name will never be forgotten. But gold I will scatter over the poor.

So I thought and let my camels halt on the wide esplanade before the imperial castle. " When the sun shines innumerable atoms become visible." Here people swarmed in the tawdry bazaars, here as in Chandni Chauk is a meeting place for all the world. Here their ways cross, men from Zanzibar and Syria, from England, Holland and Turkey ; from Khorassan, Zabulistan and China, from Kabul, Turkestan and many other countries. The fruitstalls are laden with pomegranates and peaches, with melons and grapes : what would not

one give to refresh the palate on a day like this ? Like whole gardens the flower stalls fill the atmosphere with delightful perfumes as from thousands of scent bottles. Here they are cooking spiced food, there they cry all sorts of articles for sale, everywhere there is a stir and din, but it all harmonises like verses in a poem. At little tables the astrologers are sitting with their instruments and their books opened ; earnestly they point at the signs of the zodiac and read into the future of many a trembling woman, who wrapped in white from head to foot, listens to her verdict and slips away in the crowd. What have you to tell about my fate, you young interpreter in the language of the stars ? Will the hour of bliss strike for me, or is it sorrow that the eye of the heavens forebodes ?

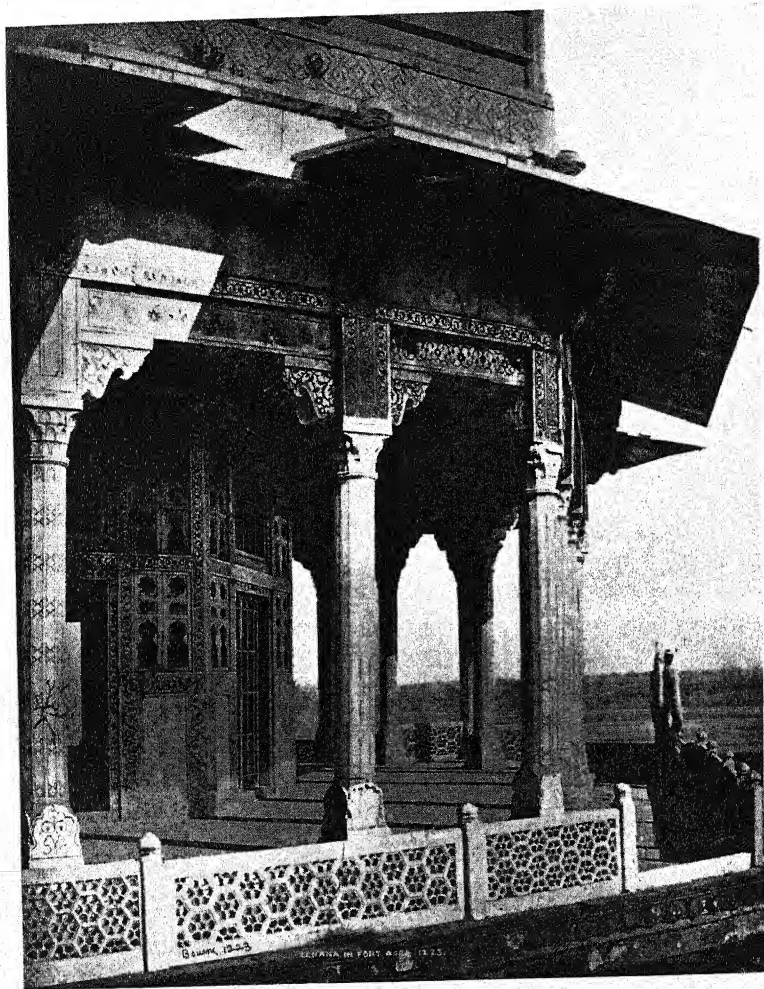
See how mansābdār, amir, rāja move on towards darbar with streaming standards and large escort ; it is a splendid retinue. The rattle of the arms sounds like a hushed war-song. And others pour in to join the long procession on its way to the Divān-i-Am, dancing girls in gorgeous attire are seen in glimpses behind the silk nets of the palanquins ; big elephants painted in black with silver bells and white cowtails from Thibet, hanging down from their ears, pass majestically on between small elephants, which are supposed to attend on them. How vividly I see it all !

Now come the panthers stealing along and the leopards ; the grey oxen and the tigers from Bengal follow. They are ambassadors from the jungle, as the big birds of prey, carried after them, are messengers from space. Last of all come the uzbek hounds with their red coverlets. Round the big animals pennons fly and trumpets are blown. But finest to behold are the gazelles. ✧

Many sights pass before my eyes, but only one thought reigns in my heart. When comes my warrior-brother with his proud cavalry, hardened in many a battle ? He will see that I am here, he will greet me . . .

And he came. The courser seemed hardly to touch the ground, and his master sits as moulded in the saddle, terrible and mild. Not yet, oh King, not yet mayest thou drive thy stallion into the fight to the song of bards. Shall I then never even touch thy hand . . .

He halts, he dismounts and greets me slowly with his hand to his forehead. I tear my costliest pearl necklace from my throat, I trace some words on an ivory leaf, and send him these things by my nazir. Again he greets me, bowing deeper than before, and stands a moment with his hands across his breast in dignified calmness, upright. Then he spurs on his courser and disappears behind spears and javelins.



THE JASMIN TOWER IN THE AGRA FORT



For several days I lived as in a dream, when one experiences the past over again, but in a new sphere and in another light. When I thought of our meeting my garden-house no longer lay by the waters of the Jamna but far in the blue horizon, and the temple-yard in the ruined mosque seemed to stretch further in the sunlight than the marble floor in the Jāma Masjid of Delhi, the royal mosque that my father built in my honour.

Listen, oh Silence, for now will I tell of a memorable occurrence. In these days my best dancing-girl, my sweet Gulru-Bae from Gwalior, had invented a new dance with which to gladden my eyes. She dipped her gauze apparel in scented oils from Gujarat, she stuck almond flowers in her tresses and wore all the jewels I had given her. She was dear to me. Do we get clear-sighted as death approaches? For as she moved in the dance, supple as a gazelle, she softly hummed an old air, which later echoed sadly in my ears :

Jasmine is blooming in my courtyard
and wafts its scent across my bed.
Oh Beloved ! thy service was in Jammu,
perforce thou now must go to Kashmir.
I send thee letters, but none come again,
no, none come again to tell me of thee.
Jasmine is blooming in my courtyard
and wafts its scent across my bed.

And she glided out of the room. Overcome by a vague anxiety I hurried after her in the long

corridor : to thank her was my intention. Red and blue glass bowls with burning wicks were placed alongside the walls. The draught made the border of her silvery gauze shawl brush by one of the small lights, and within a moment I saw my lovely Gulru-Bae, my rosecheek, surrounded by flames. In her wild alarm she rushed on, as the hind flies in the forest fire, and I must follow. We reach an open place in the Mahāl, I throw my own Sāri round her to choke the flames, but alas, a spark sets fire also to my airy dress, and now we both stand in a blaze.

If I call loudly we can get help, for we are in my father's palace on a courtyard which borders on the Divān-i-Khās, where the emperor's evening audience now is going on. Surely *he*—governor of the imperial capital—is there. Shall I show myself to him, uncovered, or shall another man touch me before his eyes? The blush that rose to my cheeks burned hotter than the fire, and I remained silent.

But I was badly burnt and for a long time I lay chained to my couch. During that period my warrior-brother had gone with Aurangzeb on a campaign, but previously he sent me a kachli, the answer to my bracelet. This bodice was of golden brocade on turquoise-coloured ground, lined with pearls and kept together with a beautifully wrought clasp in diamonds and emeralds. To

write to him was therefore my gracious duty, and if my Rakhibandbhai would highly please his sister—so I wrote—he would give her a picture of himself, painted on ivory. When it became known to my father that I had a letter to send to one of our mightiest allies, he also wrote about secret matters and sent disguised messengers with these letters to the rāja in Aurangzeb's camp.

The days went by and the answer came. As I broke the letter it seemed to me that the handwriting was unsteady. But if the Himālayan mountains had changed place, and the sun had risen in the West, I had not been more amazed than in reading its contents : had some rakshasa—one of those malicious beings of which the Hindus speak—or had the spirit of darkness possessed my brother's soul! His letter was short, chivalrous, but written in so chilly a tone that it froze my very life within. Day and night on the watch to fulfil his duty—so began the letter—he had no time to fashion the words as he had wished. And it ended by saying that the image of a Chohan was hardly suited to the collection of portraits belonging to a Muslim princess.

But for me every joy died. In the "Tears of Khorassan" Anvari sings :

A letter whose opening is grief and affliction of soul,
a letter whose close is sorrow of spirit and burning of heart.

And now it seemed to me that mine was burning down to ashes. Had evil tongues had their play? But why listen to them? Even if a throng of saints had accused thee, my brother, I had not believed in any till I once more had heard thee speak. Hast thou become the friend of Aurangzeb and of Roshanārā, my sister, she who hates Prince Dārā and me? Have we lost our best support, the descendant of the Chohans—the old hero-tribe of Hind, the Hāra prince, the rao-rāja of Būndi, whose name is without a stain and from whose glance the evil man turns away?

So I put a hundred questions to that which does not answer, and wrung my hands. I remember how thunder boomed in black clouds; it was like thousands of muffled drums. Is there funeral in the skies? Has something heaven-born died?

The rain fell in torrents: then the lightning came—its flash cut a rent through the blackness: I gazed into a glaring gulf.

Break through the wall of woe, a voice whispered within me, and step out into the dazzling abyss

Thus the dance began towards the abyss. Many hundred torches were lit for me at nightfall, curtains embroidered with silver and gold were hung in my apartments; the flute, the violin and the cymbal were played throughout the night until

the dawn of day. Did not everything come from God, even this unbearable sorrow? Then I would prove that I could live without God. I commanded the musicians to play as though a storm had possessed their instruments: myself I moved with the swiftness of a panther to the wild rhythm, and my thoughts were full of defiance. But when the sound of cymbals softened down and only the oböe was heard I glided like a sleepwalker over the carpet: now I heard nothing but the murmur of the water by my garden-house near Firoz Shāh's canal. . . .

And I would glide on and on till I suddenly flung myself on the floor and lay there motionless: someone came and carried me away. My poor heart was splintered like glass in my breast.

I send thee letters, but none come again,
no, none come again to tell me of thee . . .

Jasmine is blooming in my courtyard
and wafts its scent across my bed.

One day there was a great commotion at court. What did I care that Dulerā, the youth with the broad shoulders and the small waist—what did I care that he was only the son of a dancer? For with his spring and monsoon songs and his eyes like those of a gazelle, he sometimes made me forget. And was I not Begam Sāhib, my father's darling, who could do as she pleased without anyone

throughout the empire daring to say a word against it? So I made the master-singer of Delhi my favourite, and he was equipped like one of the great men at court. The Muslim princess gave the humblest son of Hindustan that which the proudest had cast away.

It was the day when Dulerā rode to my palace with flying pennons and a numerous escort of cavalry and infantry. On the road he met Mahābat Khan, nephew of the great Pertap of Mewar, Mahābat Khan, renegade to his own country and apostate to his faith—one of the emperor Jahāngīr's most high-spirited generals. He was on his way to darbar. A quarrel arose between the amir's retinue and that of the singer, and the amir, besides being angry with Sultan Dārā, now also became indignant with me on account of Dulerā. The Sisodiyah prince came to darbar without a banner, and when the Emperor asked him the reason for this, he humbly replied that his day was over, as musicians had begun to carry standards. The Emperor ordered that the singer's flags should be destroyed, but I understood that we had many enemies at court and Aurangzeb many friends. Dārā was overweeningly proud, and his jokes did not always please the great. But my father had penetrated too far into their zenānas. ↓

That which now follows till Part III was written on pieces of paper rolled together and placed separately. I have inserted them here, where they fit best according to time, that is, before the war.

It was the day when Dulerā rode to my palace and Mahābat Khan to darbar. They met, and the Khan turned. A musician ! What had he to do with standards and retinue ? When a great man went on foot people made room for him to pass. But the son of a dancer ! What was he more than a mere puppet on his own horse ?

My cheek burned with shame and I hid myself in my innermost chamber. Like a poor beggar-girl I sank down in a corner—looking down into a well, deep as my immeasurable shame. Was I not the apple of my father's eye, and like Nūr Mahāl and my mother Tāj Mahāl, I knew how to govern the kingdom with my own little sceptre, yet for a husband I had no king of Nishada and no Rāma, but a youth whose name echoed faintly where mine was mentioned, yes, whose whole pomp was but a pale reflection of the splendour round Pādshāh Begam !

I tore my sāri. When Dārā, my brother, loved Ranādil and pined away from sorrow—Ranādil who

had danced on the market-place before all the men in Delhi—the emperor allowed him to marry her, so as to save his life, allowed her to be co-wife with Nādira Begam, the great-grandchild of Akbar. And nobody turned before *her* palanquin, when she was carried to darbar !

To and fro, to and fro I tossed, sitting on the floor, like one in sorrow in her house of mourning. The proud Jahānarā Begam ! If her heart had not been so starved . . . The bashful Jahānarā Begam ! If she had not tried to exalt before the eyes of the world the only one she had to love. . . . So I gathered together the tatters of my torn sārī and crept towards the window. There I saw how the gardener after the day's work took his tools and walked home between the high cypresses, home to his only wife, who to-day had borne her first son.

Oh, what a joy ! And how proud must not this woman feel who had her own kingdom, full of flowers, her own husband—her king and lover—and her child, who was her future.

How poor, how very poor was Pādshāh Begam ! And her wedding garments were torn.

My eyes flooded over with tears. Then another vision revealed itself to me : I saw a high heaven with stars—my bridal canopy. An invisible bridegroom approached : that he came nearer and

nearer was told me by the gentle wind that
caressed my cheek, was whispered to me by strains
of music that seemed to be wafted to me from afar.
Like the murmur of the sea-shell a subdued
song sounded in my ear about so pure a bliss as
never yet had been experienced on earth : time
and place had ceased to be—I leant my head
against the window-sill, and as the stars began to
twinkle I fell asleep.

I am sitting in my tower, the Jasmine Tower of Nūr Mahāl. The rain streams down, it is as if one veil after the other in grey infinitude shut the free space out from view, as if the floods on earth were about to drench all life.

A sound as of deep breath passes through the tower. It is the wind. Now it whines, it rustles—it roars across the plain. A veil is lifted ; I see how the waves on the Jamna chase each other at whirling speed. And with the storm comes one haunting memory.

✓Najābat Khan, born of the royal house of Balkh, was a great chieftain. When my father's visits to the Zenāna lengthened and his councils with his principal chiefs in the Divān-i-Am became shorter, it was often I who met the big men in his stead. Thus it happened that more than once I discussed matters of state with the Khan, even concerning the emperor's war against the King of Balkh.

It was in Shāhjahānabad a day like this. In my palanquin I had been brought home from the Jāma Masjīd. In vain I had tried to pray, and when I distributed alms they seemed to turn into dust. My heart was desolate, therefore the gifts of my hand were void of blessing.



SHĀHJAHĀN

Portrait (about 1640)



In my garden the roses bowed their heads beneath the showers, and the stems of the lilies broke. I sank down between my cushions, but found no rest! I longed to lean my head against a cold stone. Had all lights on earth been extinguished for ever?

Then I heard the clink of horses' hoofs on the road outside. It was my brother Dārā, who came on horseback. Dripping wet he stood before me, merry and high-spirited like a youth. Would I not marry Najābat Khan? The emperor lived most for his own amours and would hardly refuse to give his consent!

Soon he, Dārā, would himself be upon the throne. Then the khan would be one of its best supports. The same evening he would speak to my father.

I saw him stand before me, the great general. A tall palm, which lifted its crown high above many other trees in the forest. Strong was the sap in the royal stem. Then I saw Dulerā—a reed waving in the wind. But that was exactly the reason why he had been dear to me—that he was nobody and that his song was like the wind in the reeds when the wavelets danced in sunshine.

Now I was tired of play. If I leaned my head against the strong stem, would the glory round Jahānarā Begam be without a shadow?

I looked at my brother without answering. He laughed aloud.

"Then I will speak to my father this evening about giving your hand in marriage to the Khan," he said.

Evening came and I stole into the precincts of the imperial palace, from head to foot wrapped in dark blue silken-gauze and thickly veiled, so as not to be observed.

I passed through Hayāt Baksh Bāgh ; it was like walking in the garden of Eden, for never could all that grew on this soil have blossomed more sumptuously than now, as the last rays of sun burst forth beneath dark leaden rain clouds in a flaming blaze. The red light gave life to the white marble of the palace and the pavements, as if warmth came from within the stone ; love-lies-a-bleeding was aglow in purple, the marigold shone brightly in saffron—a whole army of roses burned in crimson and sent out its perfume as a last greeting to the daylight. All the jets of water in the canals spouted high to catch the fading gold from the sinking sun, and all round the gilded spires of the pavilions sparkled against the dark sky.

Dazzled by the light, made dizzy by the heavy slumberous scents, I hurried into the grove of oranges and lemons. There I found a stone bench in the shade. Overcome by an inexpressible anguish I sank down on it.

Should I become the wife of Najābat Khan ?
Sacrifice my imperial freedom and bow my head
in obedience to a man I did not love . . .

I remember his glance when he spoke of the
kingdom of Balkh. It flashed. And it was as if
he spoke with two voices, one cheerful, the other
gloomy. " If I were master of Balkh," he said,
" then princess . . . "

A thrill passed through my whole being. " Then
princess ! " For a single instant I had wished to
be his.

Now came the sounds of music from Divān-i-Am,
where the big orchestra played : the strains flowed
through the evening like a mighty wave, sweeping
me along within it ; I was lifted on high in a trans-
port of joy and hurled down into a vale of woe.
One tune cut the air, it touched me like the sting
of a dagger. And now I recognised the melody—
it was the same I heard that evening when I was
waiting for my Rakhibandbhai and never since.

It sounded as if one were speaking and many
weeping. But the one who spoke saw visions

Of what importance was my bracelet now to
him ? Perhaps it encircled the arm of another.
And what now is the meaning of the letter which
I read in the old mosque, when the magpie sat
upon the wall, foreboding ill-luck ; but I was

happy and life sang a song of praise, and the whole world was a garden of roses !

I stretched my arms towards heaven and felt how vast was the emptiness between them, because I had nothing to press against my heart that could soothe its restlessness. How easy the sacrifice of a mother for her child when the absence of such sacrifice weighs as a heavy loss on her that is unfruitful ! As a day without sun is woman without a husband.

The music from the Divān-i-Am became turbulent ; my heart became more turbulent still. Of what importance was Akbar's empire now to him, who served under Aurangzeb, the oppressor of souls ? Perhaps none at all. Had he betrayed our cause, my brother-knight, forgotten the glory of Pertap of Mewar and the Rajputs, as he had forsaken me, repudiated me ? You, who once called me your Sanjogin . . .

I sobbed aloud. Then came wailing strains from the flutes and the cymbals boomed with a muffled sound ; the sunset seemed like a long bloody cloth, stretched along the horizon . . .

The time had now come for my brother to return from the Divān-i-Khās. I had arranged to meet him in a secret passage, which was the shortest way to my palace : I wanted to hear my fate as quickly as possible, for it was my anxiety that had

driven me hither. Perhaps the hand could still be held back before the die was thrown.

As I approached the Divān-i-Khās I heard loud voices. I saw two men : one of them was proud of bearing in a turban of jasper-green with a high black aigrette and clad in a pale yellow, flowered khilat, trimmed with dark fur. I crouched behind a huge cactus just as a coarse laughter reached my ears, like the vein of a well gurgling deep in the earth. I peeped out between the thick crooked leaves. * It was Najābat Khan.

The men had gone down the steps and were now standing ; half whispering, on the other side of the cactus.

✓ “ Shāh Buland Ikbāl seemed to think he sat on the throne already,” the Khan hissed forth. “ Thither he will not come as long as *my* sword sits in its sheath ! Did you see how scornfully his lip curved when he announced that the emperor could not bestow the hand of his daughter on me ? Well I believe that Shāhjahan prefers to keep his begam in his own zenāna”

The khan and the amir who followed him walked on till they reached the big chena-tree. There they squatted down on a carpet, spread over the raised marble floor beneath it. I stole after them, and from a small pavilion in the corner of the terrace, I could, unseen, hear their voices.

“Perchance the emperor sooner or later will change his mind,” said the amir. “He is in need of powerful men to support his throne. Prince Aurangzeb is an eagle who may soon alight on the shoulder of supremacy and snatch away the booty, as Shāhjahān once sought to beguile Jahāngīr, his father. Nūr Mahāl, the empress-widow could have told about it. Jahānarā Begam is a beautiful woman and clever, so you have told me yourself. Rumours are spread about her wealth. The port of Surāt is hers only for her expenditure on betel”

The khan rose. Through a little opening among the creepers that clung to the pavilion I could see how the strong man was trembling with rage.

“It was not I who sued for the hand of Jahānarā Begam,” he broke out violently. “It was the Crown Prince who, full of adulation and foul flattery, led me into this trap. That she is beautiful other men know better than I, who have only seen her veiled. Ask Dulerā, ask one of the others whose names are whispered along the walls of Delhi!” Now he laughed again and I shrunk together like a baited beast of the forest, pierced through by poisoned arrows. “But I shall know how to keep my name respected, worthy of the royal house, whence I spring, without trying to



ŚIVA-PUJA. (ADORATION OF THE ŚIVA-LINGAM)

Mogul Miniature



gild it over with the tarnished bridal jewels of a Chagitaian princess! I prefer to break my own steed instead of having had it spurred on by others!" Feeling half paralysed and with every nerve on edge I gazed upon the companion. He seemed to me like a well-fed bird of prey, always prying after a new victim. There was an evil look in his eye as he sought to gain his own end.

"Keep calm, honoured friend," replied the amir. "Do you not remember how highly the chastity of the princess was spoken of when she rather let her body burn than have any man . . ."

"She is highbred enough," interrupted the khan, just as unrestrained in his language, "to wage her life, if there is question of a courageous deed for winning the man she loves. Did that man then exist, it was not I! But if I knew who he was, my sword would hang over his head. Why do we not go away? Something seems to nail me fast to this spot . . ."

I hardly dared to breathe.

He stood and looked toward the bloody-red sky. "Friend Zafar," he said quietly, "once I saw a princess. She stood in a window, watching the break of dawn. Young she was and pure, like a water-lily. She knew nothing about me. But *she* was the one I would have wished for as the queen

of my seraglio ! I would have strewn pearls at her feet, and her glance, clear as the seraph's, would have thrown open to me the portals of the seventh heaven. But in the evening she was dead . . .”

Again he burst forth : “ In my seraglio there is not a single woman who was not as pure as the newly fallen snow on the heights near Balkh. Now I go back to my pleasure garden and there I pluck my red roses and press them to my lips . . .”

The amir took the khan's arm, his face more wily than ever. I knew him : he was a friend of Aurangzeb and he hated the people of Hind. “ Imagine, brother, that you capture the emperor's daughter, the first woman in the land, from an enemy and act accordingly ! Who can withstand Najābat Khan ? When the princess Jahānarā enters your harem it will be as in paradise, she regains her virginity ! ”

The khan did not smile. He continued to rave. “ If I capture a woman out of the hands of an enemy, he must be of equal birth with myself. But if Jahānarā left my seraglio for the zenāna of a kāfir assuredly he could bow to her as to a hūri ! ”

I heard no more, I had fainted. When I came to myself again the dew began to fall, it crept into my blood and chilled it. The men had left, there was no one near. Without knowing where I was

going, I wandered into the Mahtab Bāgh. There slaves were walking round with their lanterns looking for cobras and other snakes, for the sun had set.

Nobody noticed me and I heeded no one. The whole atmosphere was laden with the scent of jasmine and tuberose, of lily and narcissus. Here all the flowers were white, only white, and their fragrance was balm to my pain. The double row of tall cypresses stood like sentinels on either side of the road as I passed on, the white lotus-flowers shone like kindly stars from the water-mirror of the large fountain. Twilight and silence everywhere. I walked across a carpet of anemones ; they kissed my feet. Here in the Hindu garden it seemed to me that someone gently took me into his arms.

I slunk into the shadow of the cypresses. I did not mind the snakes ! A venomous snake had stung my soul.

Above a rippling cascade, under which the watchmen already had lit the lamps, there was a pavilion where I could sit undisturbed.

Oh, how terrible to be born a woman ! I wanted to scream so loudly that all the people of Delhi would be amazed at a cry like that of a camel, when it shrieks through the desert bearing the heavy load that men have thrust upon it. Man guards the purity of woman, in order that he

may enjoy it, but does he ever think of the fire that runs through her blood ? If she, whom God created to be a mother, withers, pines away, is consumed in her solitude, what is that to him ? He calls it chastity. But if he covets her, what is its value then ? She becomes the sacrifice of the moment, and how quickly that moment stamps Eve's brand of sin upon her brow. . . .

I bent towards the water : it floated on like a stream of opal, the stone of sorrow. I bathed my brow. It was as if I never, never could get it clean again. . . .

Then I rose like an iris, trampled under foot, but whose stem nature's eternal force raises anew.

You mighty khan who stood before me, a palm royal amongst palms, now I see you also like a sycamore, which bends its stem whither the wind blows. You had not strength enough to lift a woman's burden of sorrow. Did you know nothing about me except the names you foolishly mentioned in your wrath ? If such a name belonged to a man, he was like the clay-image of Vishnu or Siva, a symbol for that I never attained. Small flames fluttered in the wind, when no shrine was to be found, where the one big flame could burn in shelter.

One man have I loved. I longed for the glory of his manhood like the hind who wants to slake

her thirst in the stream which comes from Himālaya. I have longed for the purity of his soul, like the wanderer who in the tangled jungle longs to see the snowtops gleam above the forest like a ladder to heaven.

Here in the land of Hind the women adore the lingam ; they wind their most beautiful pearl necklaces round their offering ; in their groves they burn the incense in golden vessels by the light of the moon. They approach the symbol of the creative power in nature with bowed head and bended knee. But in Firangistan men adore the immaculate conception : their God was born on earth of a pure virgin. Why were then the others born to sin ?

My thoughts became so weary. The water flowed on sounding sorrowfully, the air was heavy with the scent of lilies and the honeysuckle hung round me like bowls of incense. The fire-flies began to dance like small lights in the night : the stars shone large and serious above the towering cypresses. I lay down on the stone floor : it seemed that a cool hand passed over my shivering limbs.

Then a vision revealed itself to my inner sight. At the day's darbar I had seen a lion led forward ; it lowered its head and every now and then it roared gently, as when we human beings sigh. I

thought that it must miss its mate. And now I saw the lion and the lioness in an oasis in the desert : a brook sparkled, a palm spread forth its leaves, a star twinkled. This was all their world, but it was a happy one. As placid as the mountains in Kashmir they lay close to each other. What did God mean by *their* force in nature ?

I felt how the day was softly sinking into the night, and I realised how intensely plants and animals lived their own lives. Of all things created it seemed to me I was most alone, as I lay on the cold marble floor. Where was he who was able to raise me to honour before the people of Hind, when that day should arrive ? Whose bridal gem should gleam before my eyes as washed in purest dew !

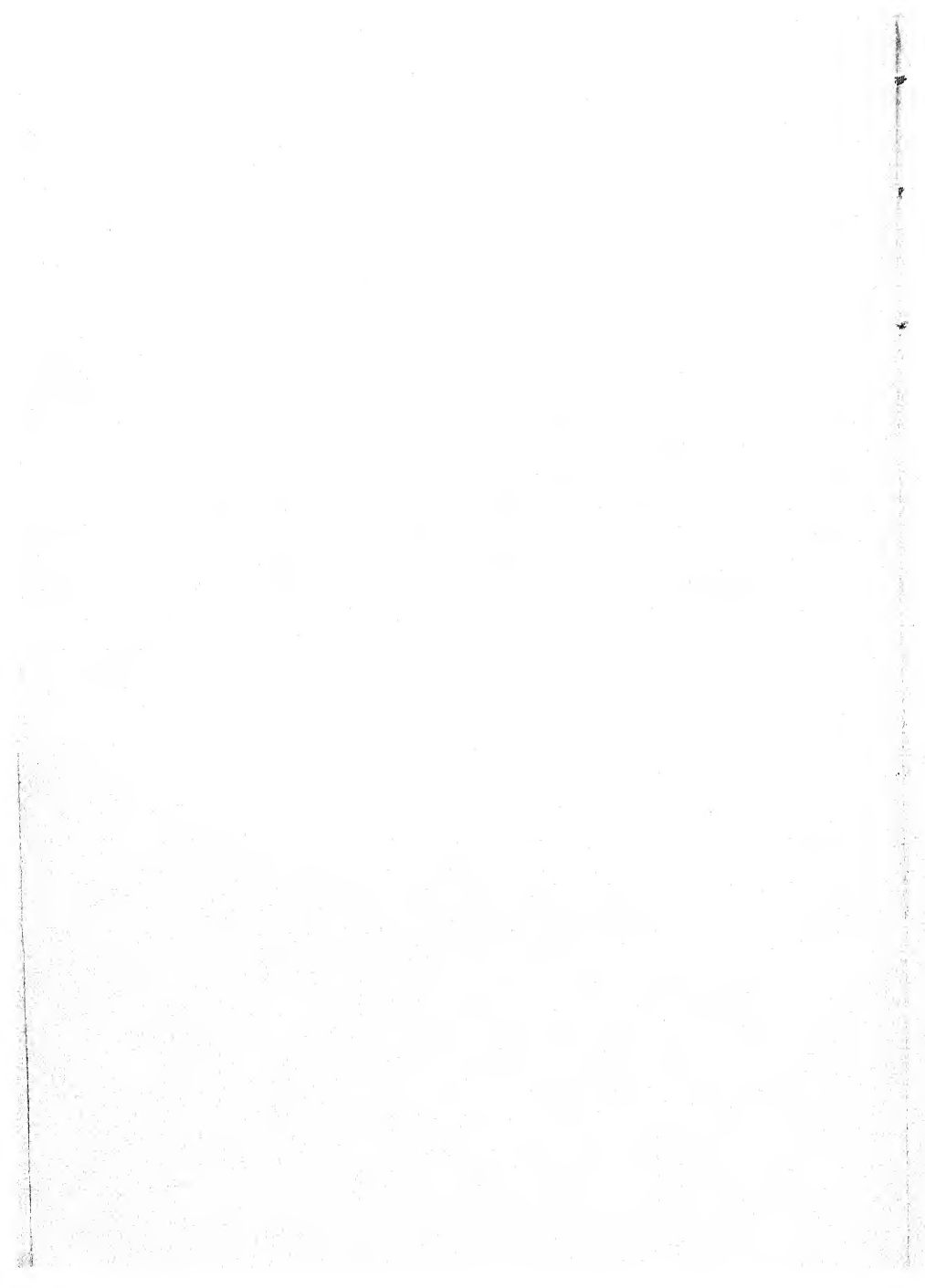
I saw a white turban against a golden evening sky and two burning eyes. "As the riddle can only be solved by the one right word, so can the heart be liberated only by the one heart to which it belongs. . . ."

My hand sought the amulet, which still hung on my bosom—his first letter. Then some lines from the last one echoed in my ear ; the picture of a Chohan could hardly be suitable for the portrait album of a Muslim princess. . . .

Did he think like Najābat Khan ? Now an iron claw seemed to grasp hold of my heart ; the world



MOGUL MINIATURE



around me suddenly turned wonderfully big and unreal : the cypresses reached as far up as the sky, fathoming the measure of my pain. So heavy was my sorrow that the floor could no longer carry me ; I seemed to sink down into measureless depths of nothingness. Before all sense quitted me my agony took vent in a cry so shrill, that it penetrated through the night and was heard in the palace. . . .

Next day they said that the Princess Jahānarā had been bitten by a snake in the Moonlight Garden.

III

Yesterday I read in Ansari's ode to Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni about his victories in Hind many hundred years ago. It was written :

“ Vestiges of the blood of his enemies which the Shāh spilt still remain in that country, for its air is full of clouds and its soil bright red. He marred the beautiful gardens of Gang and Thānesar, because they were places of pilgrimage to the Hindus. He threw down the idol's head at the entrance of the plain of Ghaznin, because it was as it were the helmet of Hind. . . . Over the wide plains of that country the enemy's blood will flow for years. The mother who has witnessed the battles of that region will bring forth no more children through affright, for the feet of the camels and the swords of the warriors are yet red with the blood of the inhabitants.”

The wise ponder, the women mourn, but who saves us ? For in the heart of man dwells the cruelty of the tiger.

It was in Zul Hajj Ahīra, 1067, that my aged father was laid on his sickbed in his palace at

Shāhjahānabad. Mere Allāh ! When I in the middle of the night was carried to his couch, it seemed to me that the ground shook under the feet of the carriers, and as a gust of wind the thought came—the foundation of the house of Timūr now gives way !

As I knelt by the bedside the Korān was fetched, and placing my hands on the holy book I swore to be faithful to my father, because he dreaded even me, unhappy one, knowing how a storm would rise all over the country at the news of his severe sickness. And he asked me to smell his hands, did they still emit a fragrance as of apples ? Never could he forget the wandering fākir who gave my thirsty mother the two apples, ripe before their time. “ The day that the smell of apples vanishes from thy hands, thou refuge of the world,” said the fākir, “ in your hour-glass the sands of time have run.” And when my father asked him which of his sons would give the death-blow to the dominion of the Chagatais in Hind, the fākir answered : “ The one with the fairest complexion.” This was Aurangzeb, who was then ten sun-years old. After that day my father bore a grudge to his third son, calling him the white serpent.

Now all entrances to the palace were barricaded by thirty thousand men, all rajputs, for they were the only ones whom my father trusted. And only

Shāh Buland Ikbāl was allowed to enter the fortress twice a day with a few followers. As we every moment feared that our father would die, my brother took good care that no tidings of his illness should be published abroad. But like seed, scattered by the wind, the false rumour of the emperor's death was spread all over the country, and the men laid hold on the hilt of their swords, like the battle-steed, who pricks up his ears at the first roll of the drum. Chief rose against chief, thieves and murderers pursued their evil ways. For three days and three nights we were spellbound by anguish: the shops were closed, the market-place was empty, and through secret passages secret messages were sent.

Then my sister Roshanārā knew how to whisper, and Aurangzeb how to listen to it. My other two sisters also whispered, each to their brother, and the fire that began to sparkle in the Mahāl was soon to break forth into the flame of open strife among the brethren. My mother's four sons had all chosen the war-call Āyā Takht, yā tābūt. But on the throne sat the Crown Prince, and to him it was promised.

✓ First came Shāh Shujā from Bengal with some of the best troops which he had enticed from Dārā. He had taken care to spread before him the rumour that our father was already dead, poisoned by the

Crown Prince. But Dārā's son Sulaimān Shakōh, the young and noble one, defeated him.

My father was soon able to leave his sick-bed, and in order that all the country might know that he was still alive he went from Delhi to Agra, whither the court followed him. Mūrād broke up from Gujarat, but Aurangzeb, who had learnt artifice and magic from black fākirs, knew how to decoy our youngest brother, so that Mūrād, powerful as a warrior, became his ally. Together they intended to beat Shāh Buland Ikbāl, the hated one, the renegade from Islām, whom they called kāfir and rāfizi.

Then I remembered the time when the cobras were seen crossing that field in Bengal like waves on the sea : my father's astrologers had foretold the evil in his kingdom would be removed and he himself would survive. But it seemed to me that the little white snake which rode on the head of the big black one was Whitesnake Aurangzeb : now it lifted its head and where will it glide with the whole of its race ? May the stars in their courses give us a reply.

The tidings of the rebellion reached us in Bilochpur, because my father had started from Agra, and the whole court was on its way back to the capital. Then we were obliged to return here with our whole suite.

Heavy were the hours as the train slowly moved on with my poor father in its midst. Bilochpur ! The name sounded like a knell. Because it was here that more than thirty years ago Prince Shāhjahān had pitched his camp in order to march against *his* father.

The high trees on either side of the royal road between Agra and Delhi shaded us from the intense sunshine ; I sat beside the emperor in the big coach that Jahāngīr Shāh once got as a present from Firangistan. Kos after kos we sat in silence.

As we turned our backs upon Shāhjahānabad it seemed like the retreat after a defeat.

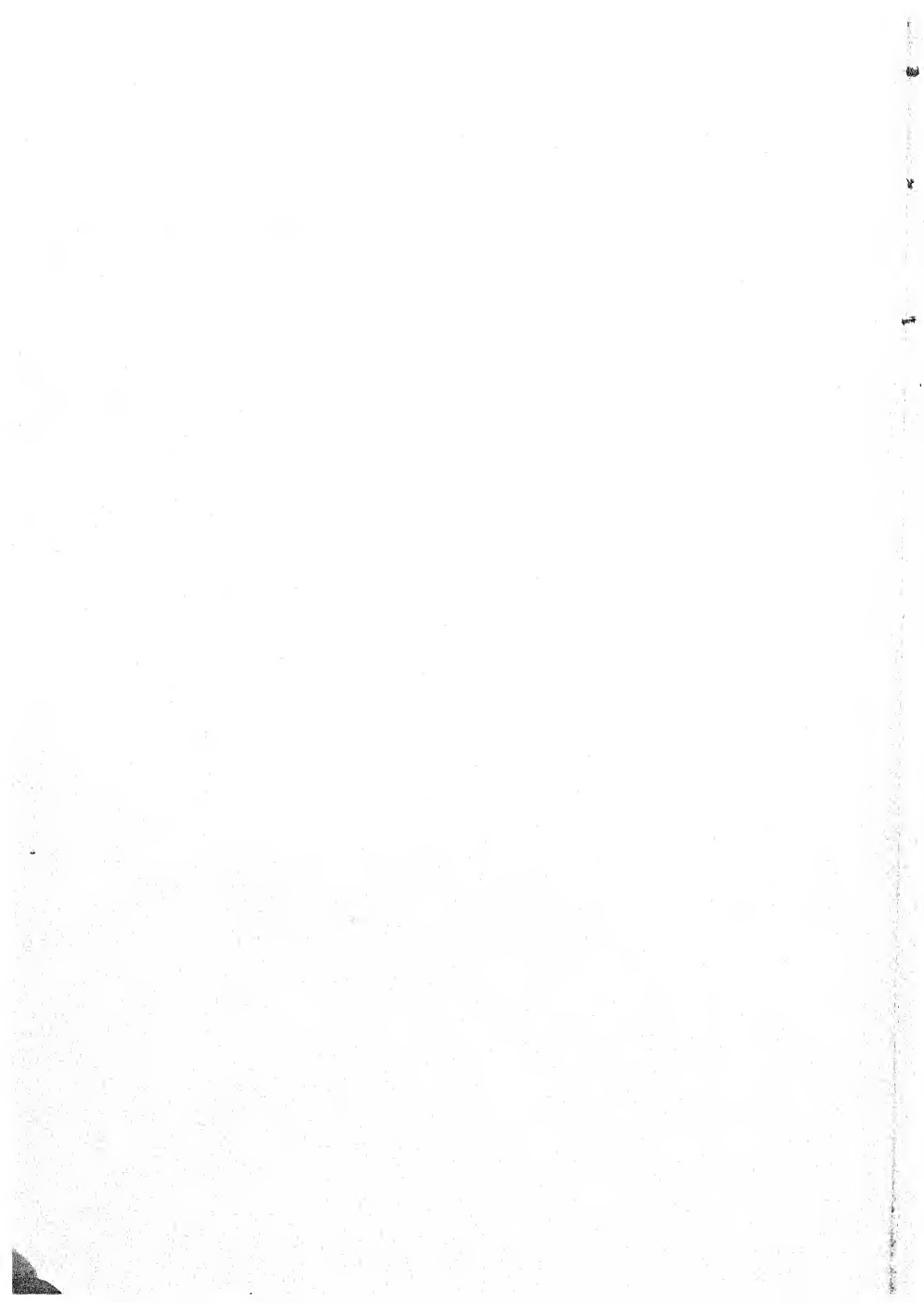
How I had longed to get home to my own palace ; it would have been like returning to youth and happiness ! For I believed that the Rāja had come back to the capital, called from Prince Aurangzeb's camp to his old office under the emperor's command. After all these years—through hatred, despair, oblivion—I was attracted to the evening sun, which shed its rays through the foliage round my summer-house on the banks of Firoz Shāh's canal. There I remembered everything just as it had been and as if nothing had happened since.

The train stopped at the big marble cistern by the crossway. Our four white horses were watered, we ate our melons from Samarkand and drank of



TIMŪR

Portrait (about 1380)



the wine from my own wine-press. Then my father began to speak and commanded the charioteers to drive on quicker.

He turned his face towards me. For the first time I noticed how old he had become ; he shrank to nothing inside his khilat, embroidered with small purple roses, and on his gold-stitched vest he had spilt wine. His features no longer retained their manly firmness, and the eyes which had gazed so majestically upon the world had dwindled to a faint glimmer. With a shock I realised that a great fire was extinguished.

He spoke of Mir Jumlah, and his voice sounded hoarse. Spoke of this Persian whom he had exalted at court, giving him the title of Muazzam Khan, in order that the new general might reconquer and give back to Hind Kandahār, the country of our ancestors. And now the khan had betrayed him.

But I found it difficult to console him. The further we drove from Delhi, the heavier became my heart.

Mir Jumlah ! He who once sold shoes in Golconda, became rich and powerful, the wazir of the King in that country and the friend of Aurangzeb. When he had led the most beautiful queen of Golconda astray, and the king was on the point of putting him in prison, he sent for

Aurangzeb, who came, plundered Bhagnāgar and robbed the graves of the old kings. That was how Prince Aurangzeb's power grew in Golconda.

Time upon time I had warned the emperor against Mir Jumlah. A great bitterness rose within me. There was a time when my father listened to all my counsels as though I had spoken with my mother's voice. But now he was slipping further and further away from us both. . . .

And I asked the Pādishāh if he remembered how Prince Dārā and I had persuaded him to call Aurangzeb back from Golconda, so that the fākir should not grow too strong? If he remembered that day in Delhi some years before, when Muazzam Khan offered him that wonderful diamond as a gift and said that in Kandahār there were no stones which could equal this one, but if he got an army Pādshāh-i-Gazi would become lord over Bijapur and Golconda, over the isle of Ceylon and the coast of Coromandel with their countless diamonds. Again he thrust forward a handful of the glittering stones, and he got the army in spite of all entreaties from Dārā and myself. With this army he now stood by Aurangzeb's side. Did my father remember?

Then the emperor drew himself up, as if he had been sitting on his throne in Delhi in the refulgence of the seven-and-twenty crowns which had thrown

their lustre over the dominions of Timūr Beg, and I fancied I saw how he once more imperiously stretched out his sceptre over his people.

But only for a moment, then he sank together again without answering me. And suddenly I felt a strong desire to regain my old power over him.

My brother, the fākir, was not the man who allowed his eyes to be blinded by vain show, I continued eagerly. When he had deceived his friends the beggar monks—who had so often served him as spies—of a hundred thousand rupees, intending to buy a row of beautiful pearls with them, his old teacher Shekh Mir whispered in his ear, without looking at the finery, that if his mind was not set on bigger pearls he might buy these, but it would be better to enlist soldiers for the money in order to gain lordship over what was more worth. And Aurangzeb did so; with those soldiers he took Surāt, the seaport which belonged to me! It was not stones that we required in Agra, but flesh and blood—horses and men.

Here I stopped short, afraid of my own voice. My father bent towards me; how crooked his back had become! His eyes shone with fatherly affection just as they had done when I was a child and left my play to run into his arms.

“Daughter,” he said softly, “do *you* remember who those were who begged and entreated me to

forgive Prince Aurangzeb—lastly to remove him from Gujarat to the Dekhan, where he now has collected his armies ? ” I felt a hot hand on my brow. “ And do you remember how often I warned you against placing too much trust in your brother ? Outwardly the snake shines, inwardly it carries the deathly poison. I had noticed the signs of ill-luck on the Crown Prince’s brow when he was only six days old, but signs of success on the brow of Prince Aurangzeb.

If the blanket of a man’s Fate has been woven black,
Even the waters of the Zamzam and Kausar cannot wash it white.”

I kissed his hand humbly. How true it was ! How many times had not my brother Dārā and myself, bewildered by Aurangzeb’s letters, so full of deceit, besought our father to excuse him !

And what was it that now struck us both mute ? Did it not seem to us as if the prince of fair complexion with his dark glances pattered round us like a panther approaching its prey ? Was he, destined to waylay the house of Timūr, in spite of all the last one of that house who still knew how to wield a sceptre ?

When we came to Sikandara, the last halting-place before Agra, my father and I went alone through the large gate in the wall that encircles

the garden, where the grave of the Emperor Akbar stands.

Never before had the sanctity of the place moved me as now. We sank on our knees before the mighty mausoleum of red sandstone, without equal in Hindustan, and I touched the ground with my forehead as was done in the time of the Emperor Akbar.

Then we mounted the steps in the funeral shrine, which seemed principally to consist of innumerable pointed arches, which open out in all directions, and of masses of small pavilions and balconies with rails of elegantly perforated marble.

Nothing weighs heavily, nothing oppresses, here everyone may breathe freely, realising that "The ways of God are as many as the souls of men."

Was it Akbar's intention that the men who belonged to his great order, the Dīn-Ilāhī, should assemble here after his death? When he built his grave, five stories high, did he then think of his great predecessor King Aśoka, who summoned members of the Sangha to meet in elevated temple buildings, akin to the richly ornamented buddhistic-monasteries with their cells, where thousands of brethren accumulated wisdom from nature and from intuition as the bees gather honey in hives?

My father became more and more thoughtful and began pacing to and fro under the arcades.

Did he think of the time when he as a young boy was the favourite of Akbar and declared that he would not abandon his dying grandfather as long as he lived, whereas the father did not dare approach the palace on account of the plots planned round the deathbed ? Or did it occur to him that he who slept here beneath the stone, had dreamt that the boy should accomplish one day great things in his kingdom when he had grown up ?

I dared not ask but crept to the upper story where everything is white marble. The walls of the room, in which stands the cenotaph of the emperor, consist of beautifully-wrought trellis-work, looking like a row of windows through which gleams the green from the garden. Above the sanctuary stretch the vaulted heavens in place of the dome of exquisite speckled marble, lined inside with pure emblazoned gold, which was intended to crown the mausoleum, but never was placed there.

Now the sun shines in the daytime and at night the stars gleam in thousands of patterns above the white coffin with its flower-relief and inscription in black letters.

On the ground-floor in a dark crypt, to which the daylight comes only through narrow apertures in the wall, lies the last great hero of Hind buried, his face turned towards the sunrise.

On my knees I crept up to the white coffin and hot tears fell on the marble roses. Oh, could I have worked wonders, like those told of in holy legends, my prayers would have awakened the mighty one to life, and he would have risen to save Hind from sinking back into darkness !

Then it was as if he had lifted his breast against the sepulchral stone, broken it to pieces and cried out to us: Save my kingdom for eternity! . . .

I hear my father's steps on the staircase. But I would leave him in peace by the cenotaph and hastened down into the garden.

Encircled by its high embattled wall, this consecrated ground becomes a piece of holy land ; I seemed to stand in the paradise of the Hindus. The mausoleum's red mass of sandstone became Mount Merū, and its white crest above the trees became the temple on the mount. Like a huge cross, broad paved walks stretch out from the grave of Akbar. In their middle, water runs in narrow channels ; it becomes the four rivers which flow from the secret well in the mount and stream towards North, South, East and West, fructifying the earth. But to me all the trees in here seemed holy, as I wandered through a long avenue of pomegranates—blooming life, and cypress—death and eternity.

Perhaps the gold no longer shines in the imperial

treasury, when the gorgeous fruit-trees out here still are harvested by white-clad mullāhs for the poor.

My jewels—chain upon chain—weighed heavy on me.

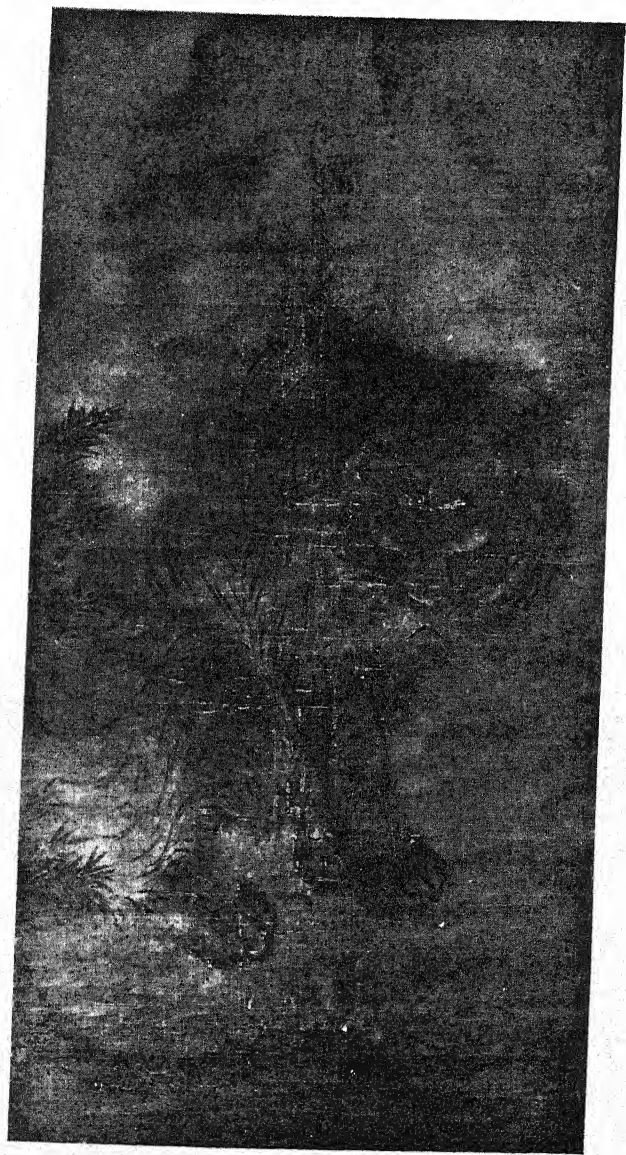
Before we returned to Agra I wished to see the country that lay around, and so I climbed the steps to the top of the outer gate.

Blue, as though it had taken its colour from the distant mountains, Jamna glides across the plain ; cupolas and minarets gleam above Agra like palaces in the clouds, and against the horizon in the South rises the entrance portal to Fathpur Sikri, Akbar's abandoned city.

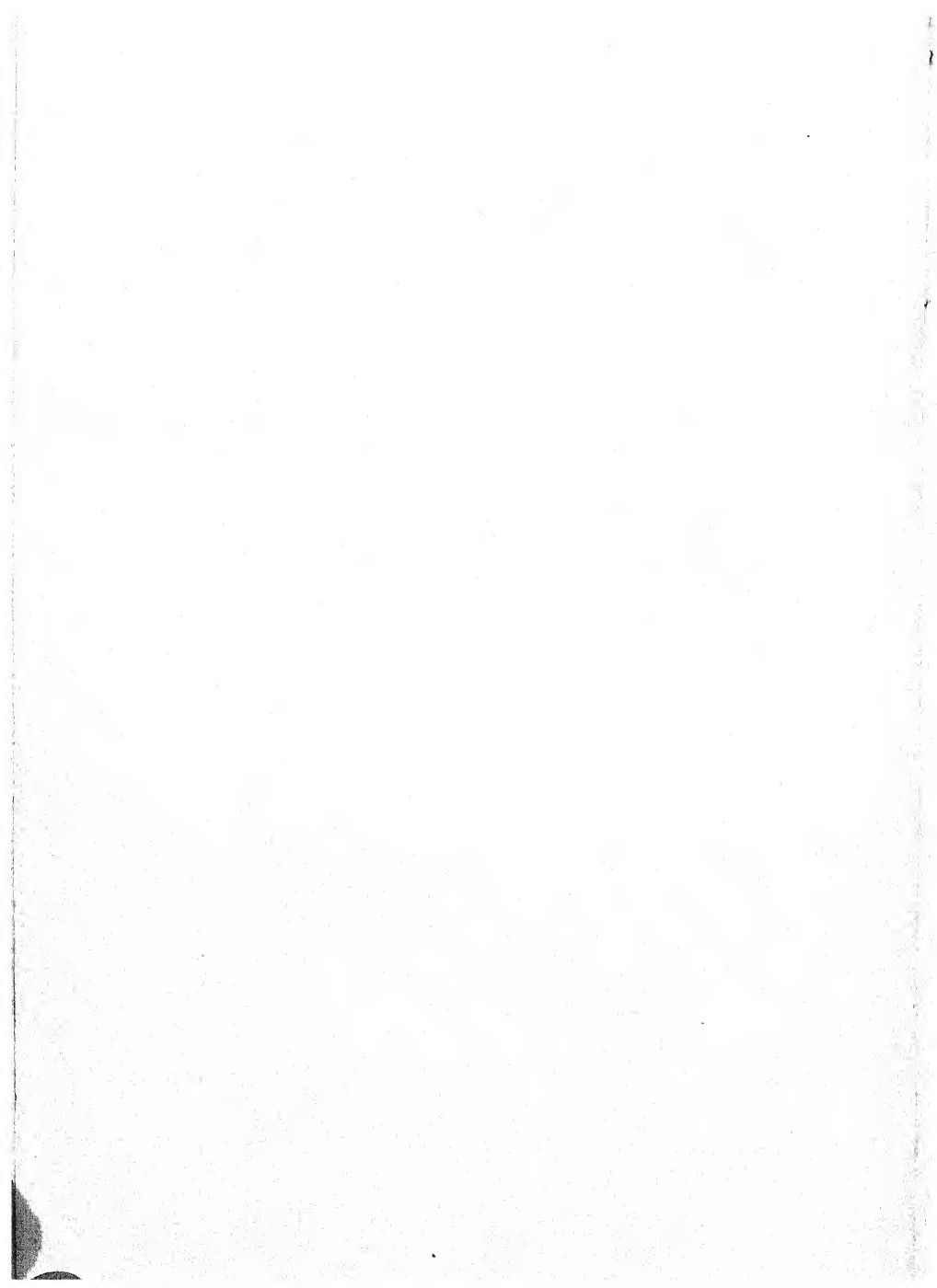
How long would the plain lie green as now without pools of blood and red footprints everywhere ? How long would the birds sing in the groves round the mausoleums and in the pleasure-grounds of the great, before the war trumpets should frighten them into silence ?

I longed to pass through the portal far away at Fathpur, where we sisters and brothers, born of the same mother, had played as children. Perhaps I should find hidden there a talisman against the disaster which threatened us all !

As we approached the fortress of Akbarabad—the long red rock I now live in—its colour deepened



PICTURE OF MU CHI, CHINA
(13th Century)



into the hue of blood, for the sun went down. The market-place in front of the castle was deserted, and a big black bird rose on heavy wings from the moat, shrieking. I shuddered at its doleful foreboding, and wished to answer it with a cry of longing towards Shāhjahānabad.

✓ As we were going to drive across the drawbridge, something in gay colours fluttered before our eyes from the archway of the Delhi Gate, the only entrance to the fortress. It was the outriders of a cavalcade : I saw immediately who it was. On a litter swinging between two elephants and sheltered by a magnificent net in many colours, sat the Princess Roshanārā ; a slave boy waved a golden fan with peacock feathers in front of her. It was a sight I never shall forget ; I felt as if the elephants would trample over us two who sat in the coach of the Emperor Jahāngīr.

Our outriders stopped : a strong odour of scents permeated the air. My sister lifted up the net : I saw the teeth shine in her painted face. The cavalcade was allowed to pass : the Princess was on her way to evening prayer in the Jāma-Masjīd, the mosque built by me. " Not all the trees I have planted bear good fruit," murmured my father in a hollow voice.

✓ We had not come far within the gate before we noticed how everything at court was confusion.

Shāyishta Khan and the son of Mir Jumlah, Amīn Khan, had written to Aurangzeb that the emperor was soon going to die, although he every day sat at the Jharoka-window and all the people saw him. They also wrote that Aurangzeb and Mūrād ought to hasten onward with their armies against Agra, before Prince Solaimān Shakōh with his well-drilled soldiers could return from Bengal where he had pursued Shāh Shujā. The letters were intercepted by Dārā, who put the traitors in prison. The people had been waiting all day outside the palace of Shāh Buland Ikbāl to hear news of their fate. Wildly had my brother raged, but his heart was mild. When the sun began to set the doors were opened to Shāyishta Khan and Amīn Khan : my sister Roshanārā had gained the day, and the path towards our ruin grew ever steeper. . . .

Now my pen flies across the paper as if haunted by the endless agony of days gone by, and the ink turns to blood. Oh, king of the winds, let loose all winds ! Winds, bring with you the clouds, weep, weep over Delhi !

Like threads in a web, noiselessly gliding to and fro, the spies stole cunningly between court and camp during these days. In Aurangzeb's camp Mir Jumlah made believe that he intended to take

his place beneath the Emperor's banner—ostentatious were his words, pompous his demeanour—so that Dārā and the Shāh might listen to the tale of his incorruptible fidelity. But the truth was that he had already gone over to Aurangzeb. Sooner or later we got to know everything here in Agra. To each of Shāhjahān's other generals, who were encamped further away, Aurangzeb sent messages saying that the Shāh was dead, and if they would side with him he would raise their pay. How could it befit such valorous men to stand under the command of an infidel leader, an enemy of the teaching of Muhammed like Prince Dārā ! The generals swore on the Korān that if the Pādishāh were really dead, they wished to side with Aurangzeb. But first they wanted to know if the Emperor lived or not, and for that purpose they sent messengers to Agra. Alas, it was of no avail ! Aurangzeb commanded that everyone who crossed the river Nerbadda should be examined and those who returned with an answer were beheaded. In this way he won over all my father's generals except Mahābat Khan—who, worthy of his ancestry, left for Agra—and him whom I once had elected my brother-knight. First he marched with his men to his own country and then on to Shāhjahānabad.

Before starting from the Dekhan Aurangzeb

had forced all the other chieftains to fall down on their knees and pray that the victory might be his. As he rose from prayer, he quoted the great Alexander's words when he marched against Darius, King of the Persians : " I will either cut off my adversary's head or lose my own ! "

Well did my brother know when to pray ! Had not the world of Islām echoed with praises of his piety when once he led the imperial army in a desperate fight for Balkh against the countless legions of the King of Bokhara ! At the time for Zuhār he stepped down from his elephant, bowed his knee and read his prayer calmly from beginning to end between the fighting armies. " To wage warfare against such a man is to destroy oneself ! " exclaimed Abdul Azīz, and a flourish of trumpets brought the war to an end.

The battle of Ujjain took place in Rajab. Mūrād, the lionhearted, beat my father's friend Rājā Jaswant Sing and all the noble rajputs who had attached themselves to our cause, because the other Muhammedan commander of the imperial troops was a traitor. He buried his powder for the use of Aurangzeb and withdrew from the fray with his men. When Jaswant Sing came home alive but defeated, his wife bolted the gates of his own castle : rather would she have been a widow

and mounted the funeral pyre than have honoured his return. For a rajput conquers or dies.

After the battle of Ujjain the allied forces of the two brothers approached Agra. Devout in his despair my father lifted his hands to heaven, exclaiming, "Jā Allāh! terī razā! My sins punish me and I deserve it all!" Now he wished to take the field himself and commanded that his tents should be made ready. Was not Timūr Beg of the same age, when he marched against Hind and fought like a common soldier in the ranks? Now the whole country should once more know that its monarch was alive! And who can tell how things might have developed in Bābur's and Akbar's Hind, if Shāhjahan had been carried along at the head of his troops? "One brain suffices for a whole army." Every man who was now marching against him really belonged to his own army and the amirs were attached to the Emperor by the bond of gratitude: glory still shone from the throne in Delhi. Like the lamp in a house, whose light attracts everyone to draw near, is the aureole that illuminates the head of an upright ruler.

But the traitors would have it otherwise. Shāyishta, the brother-in-law with hatred in his heart and good advice on his tongue; Khalītullah Khan, like Shāyishta a wronged husband—both

knew how to thwart this decision. Like wicked jins, who for once had succeeded in learning a secret, as they stood listening at Heaven's door, they hastened to fulfil a dark destiny. Above all other dignitaries at court the Pādishāh had placed the rajput princes Rājā Ram Sing and Rao Chatter Sāl of Būndi. Called to Agra from Delhi the Rao had speedily left the capital and reached the court shortly after our return from Bilochpur. Since the day when I had opened that fatal letter, many years before, I had not seen my brother-knight.

It was early morning. A grey dove with rose-coloured throat had been sent forth to summon the rājā to the kissing of the threshold.

The day was warm. All the flowers were in bloom, all the bees were buzzing. The scent of blossoms hung heavy about Anguri Bāgh. To see him go between the heliotrope bushes to Khās Mahāl, where my father held his private councils, I had hidden myself behind a magnolia tree.

The river Jamna glittered like all the diamonds of Golconda through the trellis-work of the marble parapet. A gentle breeze lifted my veil.

Did I hear footsteps—or the beating of my own heart? For many a day he, the only one, had seemed more dead to me than those who sleep in the tomb. But when anyone spoke of the victories

of the heroic rāja for the throne in Delhi—Daulatabad, Gulbarga—then my heart exulted proudly, as if I had stood triumphant by his side, or shrank in wild despair, as if I had been crushed like the hosts of his enemies.

By the strains of the vina under the soft light of the moon memories had been aroused from their sleep like souls on the wide fields of Resurrection, and the past had returned once more to life.

Were my memories now to become soulless shadows in the light of a new reality? Were they, too, to be taken away from me? For a long time he had obeyed the orders of our arch-enemy, and he had returned recently to his own country and his own mahāl. . . .

I became cold and hard—as one that is dead.

Then I saw his white turban against the blue morning sky, and fire ran through my blood, as when the dead are awakened to new life by a miracle. For his bearing was as lordly as of old, and as of old his glance burned beneath his eyebrows, though the years had graven wrinkles on his high forehead.

I heard the rattle of his sword, heard his footfalls die away. In a frenzy of love and despair I sank on the ground and drew the veil over my face. The present gave way to the past—the buzzing of bumble-bees stole into my ear like the far-away

strains of the night orchestra playing an unforgettable melody. Closing my eyes I saw the evening star shining ; every flower was exhaling the fragrance of tuberose, as the water of the cascades murmured softly, now as then. . . .

Hark ! Is that the sound of thunder afar off ? Now I am reading his last letter to me : could the picture of a Chohan find a place in the portrait gallery of a Muslim princess of the imperial house ?

I rise with a start. The blood throbs in my veins. Now I remember how it began—the dance towards the precipice. I remember how I tried to live without God—ah, for many a day—and pressed out the juice of poisonous herbs to alleviate my pain. How I hated him I loved, the stranger who was so uncomprehending, the prince of another race, who deceived me instead of defending me . . .

Across the marble terraces I hurried back to Saman Burj. The sun burned in the Jamna, but the depths below were cool. I stretched out my arms towards the glittering waves. Fain would I have perished in them.

An hour or two later I was on my way to Fathpur Sikri, which I had not visited since my childhood. The swiftest colts had been taken from the

emperor's stables and harnessed to the lightest of the carriages, once used by Nūr Mahāl. My nazir Hāzir and my faithful slave-girl Koil were my only companions.

The day was hot, but violent gusts of wind stirred the sultry air from time to time, foreboding a storm. We flew past villages where people stood gaping after us, for members of the imperial house did not often drive in carriages. The vultures lifted their satiated bodies heavily to move from one carcass to another, and the crows gathered on the dunghills croaking harshly. But on fields and meadows where no human beings were to be seen, wild peacocks strutted and pheasants ran hither and thither; by ponds and marshes, glimpsed behind the trees, long-legged waterfowl flapped their wings, and the gay little palm-squirrels jumped far out into the road.

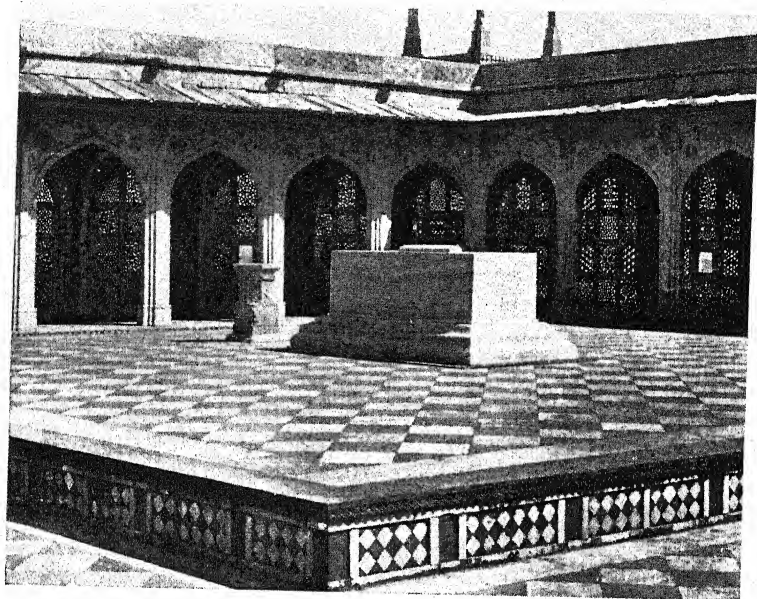
But there seemed to be something strange about it all. I could not understand how any living being could breathe at ease—so profound was my own uneasiness.

I saw the swords of the outriders gleam in the clouds of dust as they dashed on in front of us—methought I saw the flying squadrons of Timūr, who prepared the way for his victories, routing the twenty thousand cuirassiers of Bajazet in their impenetrable black armour.

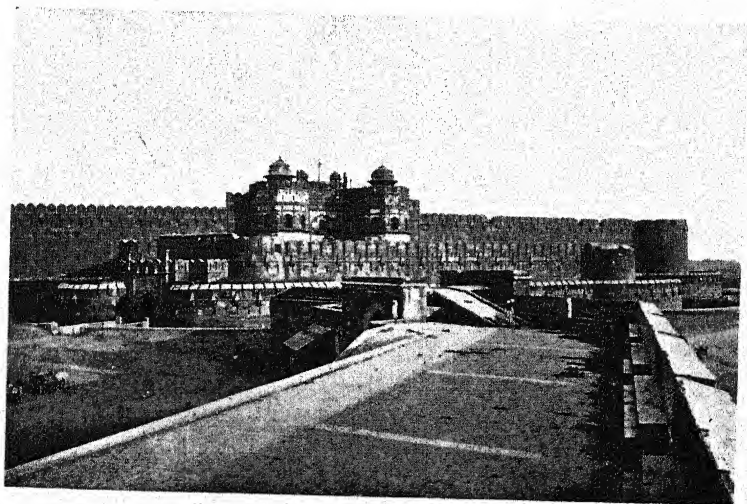
I felt new courage waxing strong in me, and what I had just gone through in Anguri Bāgh took shape in one passionate resolve : I would win the Rao's heart, win it back wholly. He should pray for forgiveness on his knees, and as before he should swing the sword round his head and swear fidelity to the cause of the emperor, even unto death. That cause which rumour said he was once on the point of betraying. . . .

But now we would gain the victory, gain it together ! And I would pray for that victory in Fathpur Sikri, Akbar's city. Thither I had long wished to go, as on a pilgrimage. It was as if I had expected the great one to meet me there himself, to open his arms and bless me ! In the city of victory by the tomb of Shaikh Salīm Chishti . . .

Now the horses' hoofs beat the paved courtyard in Naubat Khāna, where Akbar's musicians lived and where they received him with jingling music from their balconies, as he passed through the arcades of the Naubat Khāna towards Fathpur with his glittering escort. And presently I reached the wide flight of steps leading to the Jāma Masjīd. Where in all the world is a portal to be found, so gorgeously beautiful as Buland Darwāsa ? After Akbar's victories in the Dekhan it was erected—three stories high and fretted—not only as a



CENOTAPH IN AKBAR'S MAUSOLEUM, SIKANDARA



AGRA FORT



triumphal arch for the conqueror, but more as though the spacious vaulting were intended to shelter all whom he wished to protect under his sceptre.

Fain would I have washed each of the steps with my most precious wines, and climbed them barefooted.

“Saith Jesus, on whom be peace! The world is a bridge, pass over it but build no house there; he who hopeth for an hour may hope for eternity: the world is but as an hour, spend it in devotion: the rest is unseen.”

This inscription is written in Arabic letters on the archway.

Through the horseshoe-gate I walked into the mosque: every sound seems to be hushed in the town of Akbar. It is a city abandoned for ever, and yet it might have been built yesterday. Bathed in sunshine the greatest temple yard in the world still waits to receive souls, washed pure in the invisible fountain of life.

Colonnades, high, wide and beautifully fashioned with panelled ceiling and recesses in the walls, form a square round the open space in the centre; their majestic vistas from end to end conjure up visions of men in silken clothing who lived in the imperial Imām's time, and passed in solemn procession through the long colonnades on their

way to the liwān, joyously dreaming of all the new prospects of life and thought revealed by conversion to Dīn Ilāhī.

Nor was it long since hosts of students thronged the very stones which now echoed with my lonely footsteps, for out here and in all the small cells which adjoined the colonnades was the university of Fathpur—the soil in which Akbar's new liberal doctrine was to grow. For in this doctrine mathematics, and medicine, history and philosophy were more important than the Korān. Day and night learned men applied themselves to the translation of books in different tongues into Persian. . . .

But no light shines now at night from the lamps which hang from the high ceiling of the colonnades, and no youths thirsting for wisdom wander on the roof round the mosque to gaze at the stars or whisper wondering words about the problems of life.

I came to the liwān and walked through the suite of rooms for worship and into the pillared halls on each side of them. Is there any cathedral in Firangistan where so much beauty has taken form within a short space of years through the zeal of one single man? What magnificence meets the eye from wall and ceiling in the great room in the middle of the liwān beneath the dome! There is not an inch which is not richly ornamented with

mosaics, painting, enamel, carving—but everything harmonises ; there is no confusion ; one colour is softened down or enhanced by another, and the craftsmanship bears witness to the eye of a master. Before the big mihrāb a lamp still burns, and I would have fallen on my knees in prayer but for a sudden, overpowering realisation of the joy of life. I thought of the Palace of the Heart's Delight in Samarkand, where Amīr Timūr lived and of which Bābur speaks ; our forefather's dreams of paradise in a Persian land of beauty came back to me—the painted flowers sprang to life, and Arabic letters out of the Korān wandered across a field of living blossoms on the walls around me.

The news of my arrival had been spread abroad, and outside the liwān a crowd of beggars had assembled, in spite of strict orders that no one should appear in the places I wished to visit. A young man with noble features but madness in his eyes called out so loudly that his voice echoed in the vaulted colonnade : “ Allāhu Akbar ! ” A cold shudder ran down my back. Allāhu Akbar ! It was like a judgment on our whole house. For we had forgotten God.

I passed on through the liwān and came to a pillared hall : here I only thought of Hind, as I looked at the august Hindu pillars that Akbar built to support his temple. Tendrils of lotus buds

twined round the opening of a mihrāb, whispered low about Sakyāmuni himself. The light he saw beneath the Bodhi-tree, was it not the same that once shone dimly in the eyes of Timūr Beg when he was young and would not hurt any living thing—when he would not even tread on an ant? And was it not a ray of the same light that dazzled Akbar's eye once in the very heat of the chase, just as the wild animals were enringed—when he suddenly reined in his horse, fell into a sort of trance and commanded that “not even a feather on a finch” should be touched? For all life is holy.

In the corner of a chapel, where the shadows fell deep, I sat down on the floor by a mihrāb and leaned my head against the framework, exhausted by the noon-day heat and the fever of anxiety in my veins. As the ebb succeeds the flood, so peace fell on me—as if angel wings had passed through the room—and I sank deeper and deeper into a trance, between sleep and waking. Then I seemed to see a steep cliff. Where had I beheld it before? Little by little it took form, sloping down towards a tank, and I began to descry a cave which opened in the mountain, near which was a square hole like a window. Just above the edge of the water I dimly perceived elephants hewn out of the rock and higher up a man carved in stone, so well moulded that he seemed alive. As he sat there

immovable, gazing out into space, his stone face wore such a grave expression that it frightened me.

Now a light was lit in the rock-window ; its rays, reflected in the tank, grew brighter and brighter, making a golden ring in the water. A voice spake : " Far away in the wood sits the wise man, meditating. The veil has fallen from his eyes and he knows that all we suffer and struggle and die for is nothing, Oh, Princess ! He has seen the One, and after that he sees nothing more. All notes sound to him as one note, all colours melt into one great light. A beam from that light has penetrated his soul, and he sees the majesty of the self through the tranquillity of the senses. He is the true emperor of Hind "

Suddenly I was roused as if a hand had touched my shoulder. And now I knew that my soul had visited Ceylon, whither I had once sailed in a ship from Surāt, and had seen the stone statue of the philosopher in Anuradhapura. But the voice, the voice I heard so clearly, came from my summer-house in Delhi.

Fascinated by my dream-vision I remained sitting there, as if rooted to the spot. Then I became conscious of a sweet perfume as of incense made from wild herbs, and clouds of thin smoke floated through the chapel from small shining brass vessels at the entrance, where in the dim light I

discerned the shape of a man. A strange notion struck me, but alas, I soon saw that it was only the poor imbecile who had not been chased away with the others. Perhaps he knew that aloes and amber in incense vessels of silver and gold spread their perfume in the halls of Akbar and therefore wished to honour me as best he could with his wild herbs. Pain burned in his eyes as they met mine; was it not a prayer from the country to which he belonged? I handed him my choicest bracelet.

But out in the pillared hall a joyful thought struck me, as when a ray of sunshine pierces a cloud, and I proceeded triumphantly on my way. After our victory I would live here in Fathpur with my Rakhibandbhai. Here the Tauhid-i-Ilāhī should awake to life again and the charity of Shāh Akbar be in part renewed. "For divine grace is shed on all alike."

And now, as I returned to the big room under the dome, I did not remember the past only—glimpses of future happiness shone forth from the darkest corner, as from the gold arabesques on azure and purple.

But even now I could not pray. So I resolved to wait till the hour for zuhār, preferring to rest out here till next morning: I would sleep in one of the small palaces, which were always kept ready to receive members of the Imperial House. At the

King's gate my carriage was waiting for me, and I drove down to the old town, for it attracted me now like new land of which I was going to take possession !

First I alighted by the Mahāl-i-Khās and walked across its paved courtyard. If Fathpur Sikri was once the heart of Hind, the low quaint building in front of me was the heart of Fathpur itself, for here lived the great king alone with his friend the brahmin. It made me think of the tent in the camp of the emperor Humayūn, where Akbar was born. No royal splendour was to be found in it, only a jar of musk, which the emperor distributed amongst his warriors saying : " May the tidings of my son's greatness some day fly all over the world, as the scent of this musk now fills the whole tent !
. . . "

Gorgeous was the palace tomb of Akbar. Humble was the mansion in which he lived. But in the middle it was enhanced by His Majesty's sleeping-room, which is styled the kwābgāh.

Hāzir had opened the sunshade over my head, and I wandered across one of the small bridges which lead to the marble island in the middle of the tank in front of the palace. Now the plash of fountains is heard no longer, but the Turkish Sultana's house is still mirrored in the water—the faery castle where every stone is as beautifully

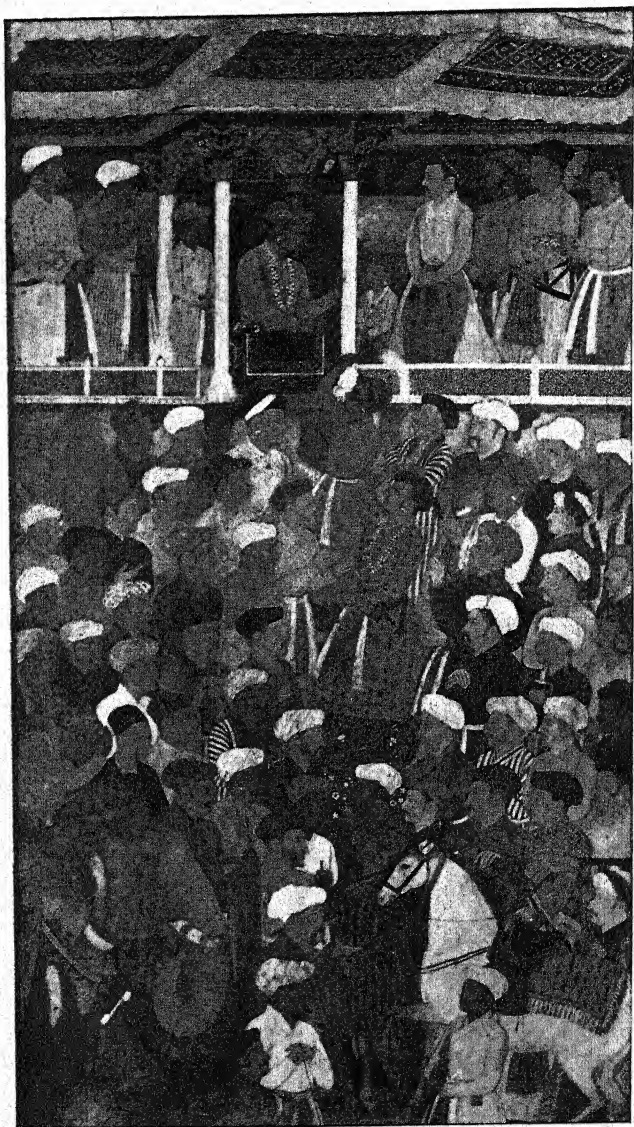
carved as if the red sandstone were ivory. On the columns Akbar's favourite fruits—grapes, pomegranates and melons—are still to be seen.

Why did everything down in that clear watery world appear more real to me than that which I could touch? The house seemed to belong to me—I hurried to it and on beyond through the passage leading to the House of Dreams. It was as if someone expected me there; one who was majestic among the great, merciful towards the humble. One who wore a bracelet

Although the room is small it is richly decorated in dazzling colours, which harmonise nevertheless like voices in a choir. How well I remembered every one of the eight paintings which I had seen on the wall in my childhood! The man in poppy-red putting his holy finger to his underlip, and the woman at his side pointing at something far away; the men in the boat with the city in the background And the child wondered what her great grandfather kept in the small blue enamel niches in the wall, wondered what was the meaning of the Persian couplets about the imperial abode, written in golden letters above windows and doors:

May the dust of its threshold become the surmā of the black-eyed
Hūri.

The foreheads of those who bow down in adoration like the angels
and touch the dust of your door will shine like Venus.



JAHĀNGĪR'S DARBAR

Mogul Miniature



But most of all the child wondered at the pictures in the recesses of the windows. There is an image of the Buddha as the Chinese paint him: attired in a garb of crimson and gold with a low crown on his head he sits in a blue shrine, and beneath him mutilated bodies are scattered about, dismembered heads and limbs in brownish red and black and white and gold. Some of the heads wear crowns. I believed that this must be Akbar himself with his conquered enemies, thrust down to hell, but I dared not say this to anyone.

Another picture represents an angel flying out of a dark cave with pale-hued blocks of stone at the opening. High up stand a pair of peacocks. The angel's headdress has a string of pearls round it and an upright feather; her wings are pure white, lovely as those of the bird of paradise. Her streaming robes are red and blue and gold with a long white sash fluttering from the waist, and in her arms she carries a new-born babe. Was not this child Shāh Salīm, who came into the world through Salīm Chishti's prayers, when he still dwelt here in his holy cave? So I believe till this day, but no one speaks any longer about the memorials of the past in Fathpur.

Would Akbar's empire have fallen if my grandfather had never been born? My brain swam; and I realised more fully than ever what it meant

to be a descendant of him who once slept in this room. . . .

Whence came these strains of music—this soft plaintive melody which suddenly stole upon my ear? Had a miracle enabled me to hear a faint echo from another world, where Akbar's musicians were playing his own melodies? I covered my eyes with my hands and fancied myself back in those days when the music outside the kwābgāh began to play early in the morning, and a glittering stream of song flowed through the purified atmosphere. Instruments of every kind and many in number, deep, sonorous and sweet. In the first watch they sounded faintly; later in the morning the melody swelled to a mighty unison of all the instruments and the cymbals raised a storm. But towards the end, when blessings were called down upon His Majesty, the whole orchestra played very softly—muted strains which spoke to the ear as the ten-times-purified fire in Zoroastrian temples spoke to the eye of the believer. . . .

I went out on to the verandah: the music was hushed. By the tank stood a group of men with flutes and stringed instruments in their hands; they were talking excitedly with one another, their many-coloured turbans clustered together. One of them lifted his head and caught sight of me: his eyes beamed. It was the poor imbecile. He

sprang away from the others ; then, striking a chord on his vina, he began to sing.

Oh, was it not Tan Sen's homage to Mira Bhai, the young queen in Mewar ? Already as a child she loved an image of Krishna so dearly that it won her heart for the rest of her life. Her forehead, which she had consecrated to him, should never bow before anyone else . . .

The song carried me to Brindāban, the dominion of Krishna, where he played his flute to his gopīs in an eternal spring—there I saw the beautiful queen dance the mystic dance before the image of the god. Everything in life she had abandoned in order to follow him who had told his devotees that no one can perish if he loves Krishna, the avatār of Vishnu, who assumed humanity in order to take away the burden of sin from the earth, and whose glory is reflected in every soul. . . .

But who was this man in ragged clothing, with his deep plaintive voice, crossing my steps in Fathpur like a warning in a dream ? Was he of my own blood and stirred by the same longing ? . . .

The song grew more and more passionate as he sang one of Mira's own hymns to Krishna. It went straight to my heart.

" I have deserted my country, no longer am I the spouse of a king. Alas, majesty and kingdom have I abandoned. Thy servant is Mira, with thee

she has taken refuge, with body and soul she is thine."

And now the temple in Dwarka, whither Mira had taken refuge for the rest of her life, with its lights and flowers, revealed itself to my inner sight. And in the same spot where she brought the mysterious black god her offerings people now perform sacrificial rites to her as well, for Mira's image has been placed opposite his. Her great love for the divine flute-player, who was more perfect than all men on earth, made her a saint in life and bestowed on her the rank of a divine spouse after death.

My blood was aflame. If darkness covered Hind, if Dārā lost the battle, if the Rao fell, I would still worship his memory as if he were Krishna himself in the land of eternal spring.

Walking across the Pachīsī court—where the Pādishāh used to sit on a low stone stool playing chess with young slave-girls as living pieces—I came to the Divān-i-Khās. In reverential awe I stopped outside the fantastic little building, thinking of what it once had been.

With its double row of windows the Divān-i-Khās seems to contain two stories, but once inside you find yourself standing in one single large room.

I sat down in a deep window-recess ; here it was cool. The music still rang in my ear, calling forth all my strength, as if I were keeping watch over a holy shrine—Hind's and my own—threatened by evil spirits.

In the middle of the room stands that curious pillar of sandstone, resembling a stalk holding a gigantic flower. On its wide round capital was the throne of Akbar.

In my imagination the pillar became the tree of the universe, whose foliage is the blue vault of the sky and whose fruits are the sun, moon and stars. It became the tree of wisdom on Mount Merū and also a unique pillar of Vishnu, for on its summit sat enthroned the living representative of the god.

Akbar, the king, illumines India's night,
And is as a lamp in the court of the House of Timūr.

I looked up at the galleries which run round the wall beneath the upper windows on the same level as the throne. Methought I could see Akbar's men thronging there and in front of all I saw the Hindus—Rāja Bahāra Māl of Amber, whose daughter was married to the emperor and became the mother of Jāhangīr, and another rāja, the great general, Man Singh, who won so many glorious victories to fortify the power of the House of Timūr in Hind. . . .

And across the four bridges—thrown right out into the air to form a cosmic cross from the pillar to the four corners of the hall, opening out into the galleries—I saw the ministers of Akbar approach him who sat on the throne—Todar Māl, the brave general and treasurer who saw that justice was done to the poor at harvest-time ; Rāja Birbāl, the emperor's great favourite, whose sparkling witticisms still delight our ears. . . .

Suddenly a hush falls on the Divān-i-Khās as Abul Fazl comes, Abul Fazl the first of the ministers, who set the world on fire when he cleared the way for the Dīn-Ilāhī. From the darkest corners in the hall I hear menacing murmurs

But beneath his own throne I see Akbar standing as he used to do when justice was administered—simply clad, in humble majesty, with that look which would have made a Pharaoh or a Nimrod tremble, but which attracted the lowly. Loftiness of soul shines out from his face. And no gramāni in his little village shows more solicitude for the hundreds around him than does this prince of a foreign tribe for his subjects thousands of miles away, from Kabul to Dhakka, from Kashmir to Ahmadnāgar.

Then I see the king's ministers up there as they return from the column with his orders, which are sent forth all over the country even as the arteries

carry the blood from the heart to all parts of the body. For he—wishing that every action of his should be a service to God—tried to unify all that was severed and torn asunder in his kingdom, as the sunlight steals through the leaves of a plant giving them strength to grow. Therefore the gratitude of a people went out to him who governed them from the pillar of Vishnu ; and although the jizya was abolished the treasury was filled.

Did not the stone images of the gods come to life and bow their heads everywhere in the unnumbered shrines all over the country—in the sun-temple of Konārak, in the city of gods on Mount Abū, in the caves of Ajantā and Ellora—when God's caliph, the new almighty ruler of Hind left them free to testify that the soul seeks its goal in a thousand different ways ?

And was not his praise mingled with the songs of the pilgrims when in unnumbered hosts they set out for the holy river that was to cleanse their souls, which were all of value to their sovereign ?

What did I see glistening and gleaming in a blaze of splendour far away ? It was the peacock-throne in Delhi, guarded day and night by armed eunuchs. And methought I saw my father sitting there as in the days of his glory, millions of precious stones sparkling round him from the twelve pillars which supported the canopy, aye, from the whole

throne. Seen thus he appeared to me to be imprisoned in a cage not less dangerous than the one into which Timūr once threw Bajazet. . . .

But the tree of the universe was here.

When Hāzir once more opened the sunshade over my head, Agra seemed inconceivably far away ; the past became the present and the future meant to-morrow. Hark, the musicians in the Naubat Khāna strike up Tan Sen's most cheerful melody to greet Dārā Shakōh as he rides into Fathpur to hold his first darbar ! . . .

Through the girls' school, situated in the Māhāl-i-Khās, I went out into the street—the broad paved road which runs between all these buildings, each different from the rest. Not a living thing is to be seen in the glaring sunlight, but the air vibrates as if with anticipation. . . .

Opposite stands the Panch Māhāl. It looks like a palace in a poem, for its five stories are made up of nothing but richly carved columns ; there is a whole forest of them on the ground-floor, then they become gradually fewer in number ; finally there is a pavilion resting on only four columns.

As one intoxicated I entered the palace.

In the first hall I met the brethren of the Dīn-Ilāhī order—several of the great men I had seen

in the Divān-i-Khās. I fancied I saw them two and two together, engaged in lively conversation, just where the pillars cast their long shadows . . . and overhead, on the ceiling and the crossbeams were large flat ornaments, the holy lotus flower with down-turned petals which holds the world in its bosom. But no one here spoke of abandoning the world as Buddha's Sanga does. The first degree of the order of Dīn-Ilāhī commanded that the disciples should be ready to deliver their worldly goods to the Pādishāh.

I mounted the stairs to the next floor and pondered over the second degree: the disciples should be ready to sacrifice their lives for the emperor. A worldly kingdom was to be built up.

Here none of the fifty-six columns is like the others—what a grove of pillars! Each pillar speaks its own language. I threw my arms round the finest one I saw, thinking of the men who were the pillars of Akbar's kingdom. And I laid my cheek against it.

At that moment a gust of wind swept through the hall, bringing a leaf from the young summer outside. That leaf came to me as a message from days gone by, and woke that awful anguish to life again; restlessly I paced to and fro on the floor . . .

For it was on this very spot that we brothers and sisters had played together as children. Ah,

how well I remembered it all. How Dārā Shākōh stuck the peacock's feather in a fold of his turban, threw his head back and acted the Pādishāh ; how Aurangzeb sat in a corner apart telling the beads of a rosary ; and how my little sisters chased each other round the pillars in their rose-coloured sārīs.

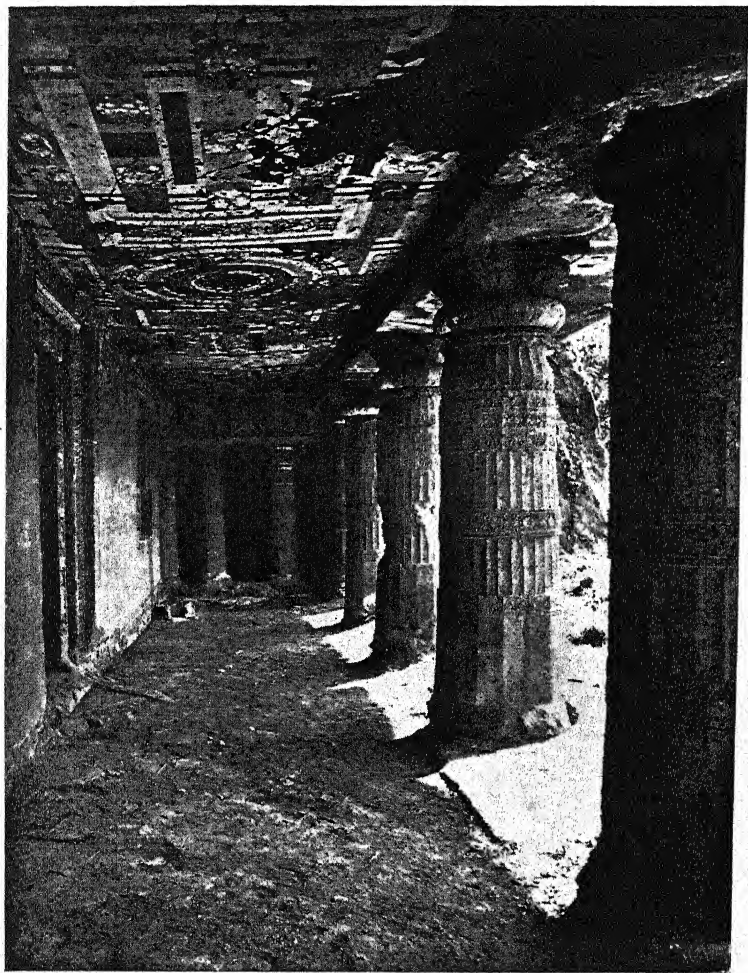
But I stood in silence by the pillar I had just embraced and looked on. . . .

A gust of wind came—even as it did but now—and swept Dārā's feather away. Aurangzeb raised his eyes from the rosary with a scornful little laugh ; Dārā clenched his hands.

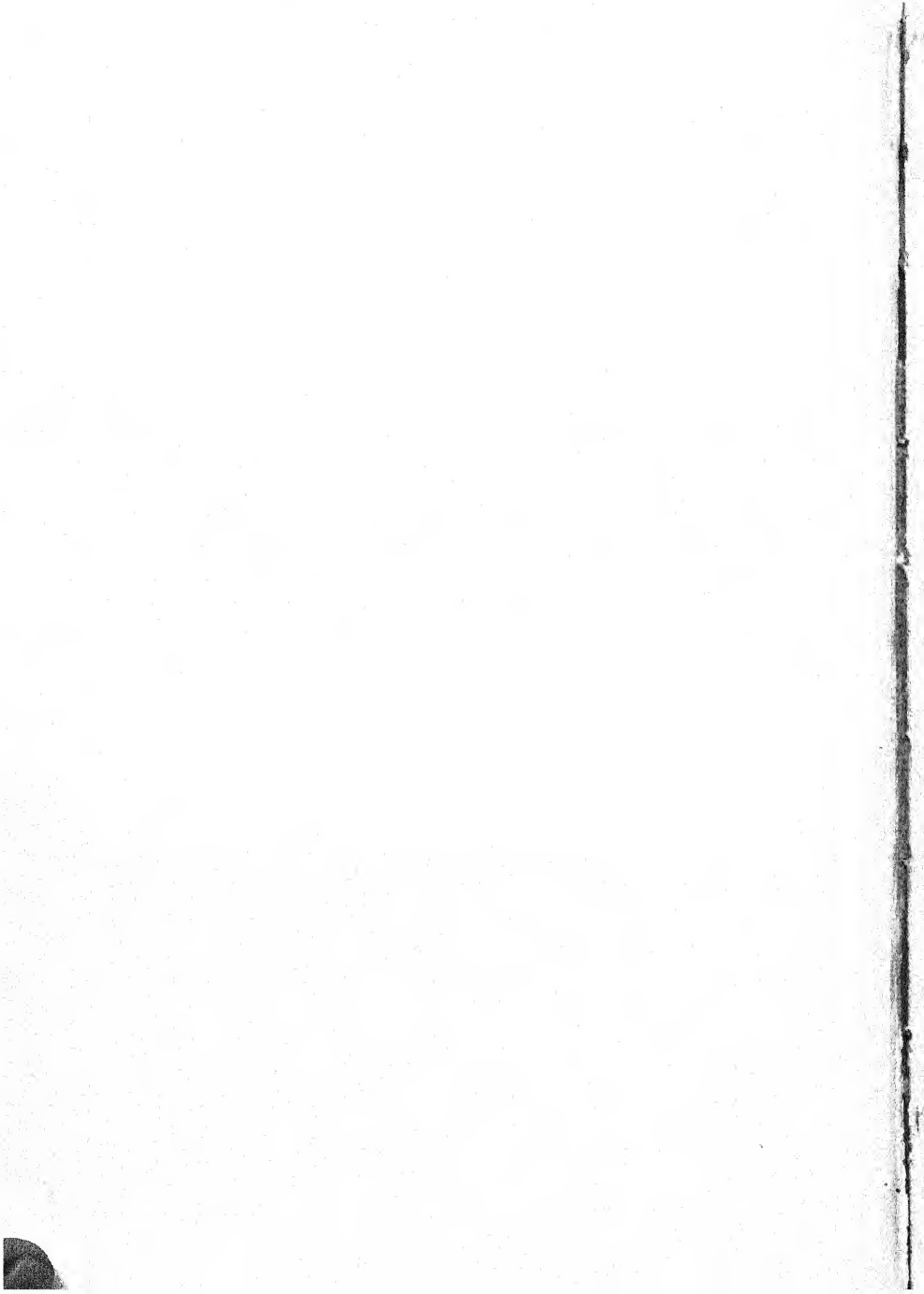
We were not grown-up yet, any of us, but we had already begun to shape our destinies.

Desiring to forget both these memories and the present, I hastened up to the third floor. I was trembling in every limb. Not many of us were ready to sacrifice our lives for that which still deserved to be called the Hind of Akbar !

Higher up among the twenty columns I could get a view of the different parts of the city—of what was still left of it ; and I saw more than my outward eye could discern, for had I not read about Fathpur Sikri in Abul Fazl's chronicles ? I saw the painting school, the big room full of disciples brought together by Akbar from every corner of Hind ; and also come hither from other



COLONNADE IN THE MONASTERY SCHOOL OF AJANTĀ
(300-600 A.D.)



countries, for the fame of this new Ghazni had spread wide. The disciples throng round the two masters from Tabrīz, and the Persian painters have not only brought with them pictures from their native country, from Herat and Shirāz, but also from the great days of Bagdad under the caliphs, and from the ancient Chinese empire. Visions of vanished worlds of glory throw their spell over these young minds, and with the juice of the flowers of Hind they try to create fantasies in colour no less beautiful than those they have seen. And lo ! the manuscripts illuminated by the young painters are soon worthy to rank even with the old master-pieces in the library of the Timūrides. But the Hindus painted best of all, as if they were still sitting in the cave-monastery of Ajantā, using their brushes to conjure up the life of the outside world upon its walls.

Now it seemed to me that the hum of a toiling city reached my ears. I saw the mint, where the finest pieces of money in the world were coined with the image of the Pādishāh ; the arsenal, with big guns invented by himself ; and hundreds of work-shops where carpets and brocades were woven, silver and gold wrought, books printed. And everywhere I saw the emperor himself moving about—the overseer of all this work. For no picture was painted on the palace-walls, no book

illuminated, which had not been scrutinised by his searching eye.

And now I saw the library—shelf upon shelf of manuscripts in beautifully worked coverings—all the scattered treasures of the Timūrides, which the emperor Bābur brought from Irān ; all that Akbar himself gathered together of poetry and wisdom from Hindustan and Persia, Arabia, Greece and Palestine—more than any of his predecessors or successors in Hind collected.

One book magnificently ornamented, stood out amidst the rest : the life and laws of Amir Timūr, bequeathed to us all. In this book it is written that : “ Out of consideration for my own kin I did not tear asunder the links of relationship and charity and did not issue any command to destroy or bind them in fetters.”

Row upon row the mighty of the earth stood waiting outside his gate ; and when he celebrated the weddings of his six grandsons with great pomp in the Canighul Gardens, was it not his dream that the Moghul world-empire should be held together by his own descendants ?

Akbar did not ravage countless lands to subjugate them, as did Timūr. He wished to rebuild Hind on its old foundation : in the dominions round Delhi the last descendants of Timūr were to pitch their tents for peace. A noble tree had

grown out of that strong root. Were the branches to be lopped now? Was all the rich fruit to be wasted until the stem perished from the earth?

Was it for this that Bābur came to Hind? . . .

And now I saw another book with my inner eye: Sar-i-Asrar, the wisdom out of the Vedas which my brother Dārā recently had had translated into Persian. A deed worthy of a brother of the Dīn-Ilāhī order!

The mocking laughter from the storey below reaches me. I see the fākir's teeth shine; the beast of prey is awake in him. He who called Dārā kāfir, rāfizi! It will be said that the Crown Prince must not only be opposed as an infidel and a heretic, but removed as a heathen! Ah, why had I not understood this before! . . .

The third degree of the order commanded the brethren to entrust their honour to the emperor, that honour which is more precious to a man than life itself. In the book Sar-i-Asrar Dārā had offered this tribute to him who was once proclaimed "Lord over the invisible."

Allāh be gracious to my brother!

Higher still would I climb, even to the room of the twelve pillars. The rule of the fourth degree was to share the faith of the Pādishāh.

I sank on my knees and folded my hands, for the time for zuhār had come.

Then the voice of the muezzin clove the air : surely he had been standing up there to proclaim the hour of prayer from the Jāma Masjīd ever since the time when the emperor Akbar was absorbed in contemplating the Godhead, as the sun reached his meridian ! A flood of light surrounded me ; my soul bathed in it, and I understood how Akbar's eyes had been opened. . . .

He who from childhood had sought Truth through others, who in the days of his youth despaired at not having found a guide for his last journey, did not notice how he was making his way alone, step by step and by the staff of Humility, towards the goal he was seeking.

As in a vision I saw the ulāmās and mullās in Idābat Khāna. The turbans swayed to and fro like big flowers in a storm : these men of learning tore the letters of the law to pieces between them and in their fury were ready to tear each other to pieces too ! And I saw how pandits and sūfis were hoisted in a basket to the Pādishāh's sleeping-balcony at night ; hanging in this way they interpreted their wisdom to the monarch under the stars. It was whispered that a man through his own strength could attenuate and dissolve his body making it slip through the molecules of a diamond or stretch out to the verge of the moon. That he could rise to the upper regions on a ray

of light or sink down into the earth to emerge again, as if the earth were water . . .

But the king himself I saw sitting on the big flat stone in a deserted corner of Fathpur Sikri, as the morning-sky began to turn pale-blue over his kingdom and while everything still lay wrapped in silence.

From the House of Dreams, from a solitary night full of thoughts about Eternity he came hither. The fresh morning-air pricks him as with little needles. Life smiles upon him. But behind Life stands Death. His head sinks upon his bosom : the eyes of his soul are turned inward. And there he finds that which no one else could give him. Like words indelibly graven in stone, a firm conviction gradually grows in his soul that there are eternal laws which none can escape, and a bond between the Creator and the created which no language can express. He sees—ah, now I see that he perceives the One, and after that nothing else.

The voice of the muezzin was heard no longer ; silence reigned around me, as it did around him who sat upon the stone.

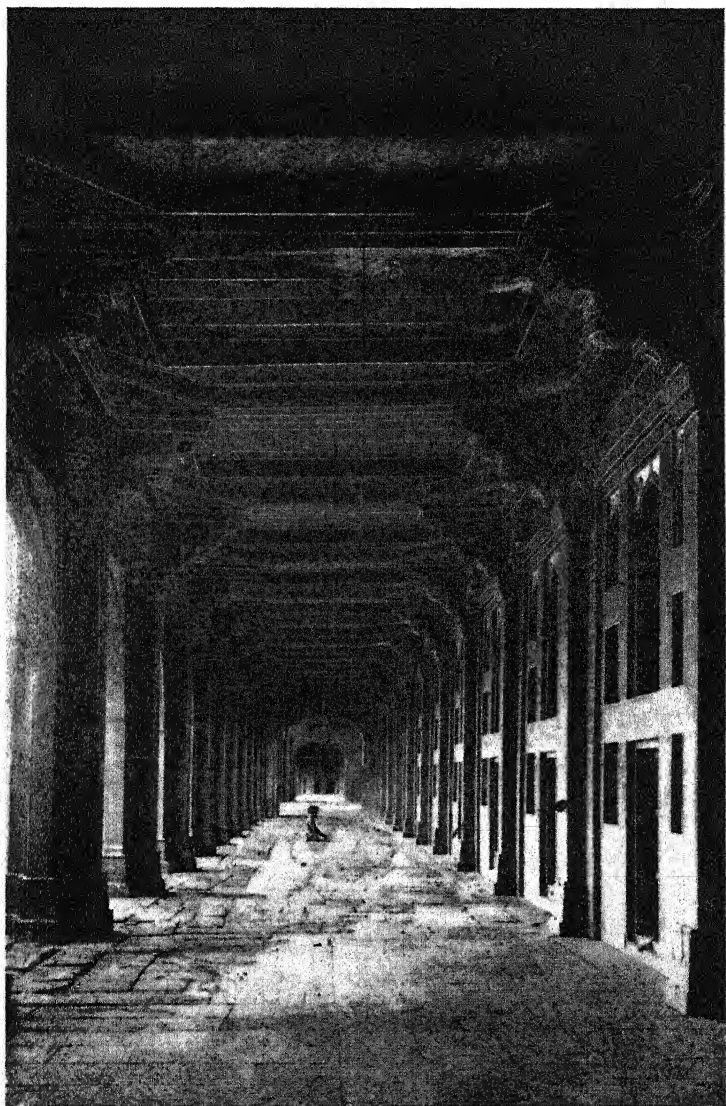
Akbar the Great was a soul in solitude. And in his faith I had met him.

The fifth storey, with its four pillars supporting the cupola, seems to be built only to contain a

throne. Here sat the royal Master of the order looking down at his city and across the distant plain like one who had at last reached the goal of his long wanderings.

For our tribe had wandered during long ages. Beyond the mist over the fields far away, I caught a glimpse of the track they had followed, from the interminable forests and steppes of Zagatai—where they moved their tents from one place to another, walking in procession and singing—across desolate ridges where icy winds blew through the orchards of Ferghāna and the flowery parks of Samarkand, past Tarīm Basin where all caravans met, until they reached the frontiers of Hind. But on the way their conquering hosts had gone round as far as Firangistan and China, aiming at the subjection of the whole world. The last tents of the Golden Horde were pitched here in Hind.

With the undiminished hardihood of their race Bābur and Akbar swam foaming rivers as their forefathers had done before them. The men of old had been able to hear sounds at a great distance and to perceive small objects far away ; in like manner Akbar's senses were sharpened to distinguish the most delicate shades of colour in a picture or to detect the most subtle tones in the chords of the vina—yet his hand could curb the wildest of elephants.



COLONNADE IN THE JĀMA MASJĪD, FATHPUR SIKRI



Thus Akbar brought glory to the outer and happiness to the inner world in Hind, when he ascended the throne of the Moguls, attired in a vestment all of gold, and wearing a tiara of dark-hued stones round his forehead. The carpet in the coronation-hall was made of Tartar silk and Chinese brocade. "On the one side golden coins were scattered round him and jewels on the other; they scattered jewels in all directions and gold from shields." The visible and invisible world mingled when the canopy was spread over the Khedive of the world, and a new era dawned in the kingdom.

So Fathpur Sikri developed, as the bud of a rose opens its petals, into a prosperity so rich that the like of it had not been seen in Hind for centuries. And he who once occupied this seat—who gazed back into the past to find a really great man and was ready to surrender his crown to anyone who could govern his kingdom better than himself—seemed to see the future as in a flash: the painters would paint, the singers sing still more beautifully, and world upon world would be revealed to the soul's wondering eye.

He sat on the threshold between what he was and what he aspired to be.

I looked back into bygone days and saw the great Sire, Timūr Beg. In exuberance of strength

he fashioned the world after his own heart ; man was not man in his eyes before he had moulded him in his own image. He who called himself the champion of the faith of Muhammed in his day !

Not by the sword or by gold would Akbar convert anyone to his faith. Well he knew that men of clear understanding were to be found in all religions and that there were men in all countries endowed with miraculous power. The man who would follow him was the man who was like him.

Pyramids of skulls marked the roads by which Timūr Beg had passed. But when the emperor Akbar went out amongst his subjects they met him with offerings in their hands, with prayers on their lips.

Once more I seemed to hear the din of the city, as if the past had awoken to life again down there ; people passed in and out of large buildings, where they took their baths ; the exterior of these houses was simple enough, but the vaulted ceilings were magnificent and the floor was inlaid. And I saw how they hurried down the stairs in the many bauli-houses to seek coolness in the galleries round the deep wells. . . .

Round the House of Alms throng the hungry ; the yogis have a house to themselves. I fancied I was one of them on that day in the year when they came in crowds from every corner of the

country, and the emperor took his meal with the most eminent among them.

Now a soft breeze loosened the veil round my head ; the rosewater that Koil had sprinkled over it filled the air with perfume—recalling the fragrance of the rose-bowers of Maryam-uz-Zamāni. I turned towards the Zenana-Palaces standing among their gardens ; the largest of them shows us that Akbar was at pains to erect a new abode for his consorts of Hind in a style which would remind them of their native home. Close by the entrance stands a small Hindu temple.

Inside the building I saw the great emperor in the banqueting-hall at sunset ; minstrels were singing sweet lays in honour of the departing light of day and of His Majesty ; and when the twelve candles were lighted in their gold and silver candlesticks—the tall white candle burned in the gigantic candelabrum—everyone in the hall rose to his feet. For fire on earth was one of the symbols of the Godhead, and a light among the lights of His creation.

Among the palaces below I also saw “ The Golden House ” and the other beautiful little residence whither I now would go to seek rest.

As against the mast of a ship I leaned against one of the four small pillars and threw a last glance over the plain, lying like the sea in a sunny haze.

And now I seemed to see horses and elephants sweeping across the ground—banderoles streaming in the wind—a day of high festivity! In an ecstasy of love, faith and victory Akbar raised Fathpur Sikri.

His love and his hate in the banquet and battle
are foaming cups of wine and of blood.

Why, then, did he desert it, leaving these proud dreams in stone to beggars and jackals? Offering up all this toil at oblivion's shrine . . .

I looked in the direction of far-away Sikandara. The haze over the plain grew denser: the trees stood like sentinels between the grave and the city, and the mists turned into smoke from the big censers which still burn every day by the emperor's cenotaph.

He came so near to me—was he not ever a wanderer? No tent could shut him in, no, not even the grave—

Did his ecstasy grow cold? The son born to him in Salīm Chishti's cave, as by a miracle, caused him sorrow. And was the victory not great enough?

As I sought in vain to solve the enigma he came nearer still. Then I made him a promise. If we won the battle all that had been strongest in his Faith should be revived in Fathpur, the interrupted services should be continued in the Jāma

Masjīd, young men, desirous of learning, should once more study the stars from its roof, and love should reign again in the palaces.

Now I stood on the threshold of Sohnahrā Makān. Here would I live ! I alone, to meet my lord alone on the threshold !

It is as if the whole of this little palace exhales the scent of the purest metal in the world : for gold shines everywhere without and within. The gold serves, as it were, to frame the paintings, which inside and outside the building charm our eyes with their lively colours. There are battle scenes and hunting scenes, red trees with birds in variegated plumage against a blue background—and carved in the niche of a column stands an image of Vishnu as Rāma, with the lotus-flower in his hand.

For a long while I stood before a picture over one of the doors, remembering the secret thoughts it had inspired in my childhood. The angel with something in his hand resembling a sword—rays emanating from him—the angel who approaches a woman sitting on a seat of honour and adorned with large wings—was he Gabriel, approaching “ The Mary of the Time ” ?

I seated myself on the threshold of the silent house, and my thoughts wandered far in the

Zenāna-world. It has been said that there were five thousand women in all in the emperor's harem. But here in this little palace the words that echo in my ears are : " One God and one wife " ! That was what Akbar thought at the end of his life. " He who seeks more than one wife paves the way to his own destruction."

Here in Sohnaṛā Makān I would make a shrine for the lingam—if Fathpur once more became the city of Victory.

Now I hastened to the other small palace where Koil awaited me. Its architecture and ornamentation made me think of a Hindu temple I had seen, and I seemed to be in a magnified reliquary of red sandstone. Panels, recesses and pilasters are carved in exquisitely beautiful patterns—as if all Asia's world of fantasy had agreed to meet in Akbar's Hindu kingdom, where beauty was intended to lead to the feet of God and not away from him !

I mounted the narrow staircase to the upper floor with its two rooms beneath two fine cupolas. As I entered the first room I had the feeling that I had come to a haven of refuge, which had long been waiting to receive me.

A Persian carpet covered the floor, and in a corner there was a handsome resting-place with

cushions of golden-green kinkhob. In a niche lay a forgotten album in leather, a vina, and a dagger. My brother Dārā must have been the last guest in the palace: no one else would have brought pictures!

The air was laden with the scent of the yellow-white champaka-flowers which Koil had put into a big earthen vessel. I sank down on the divan.

Here also the walls are magnificently carved, but their aspect inspires calm, as everything is in the red sandstone, not as in our palaces with many gilt ornaments, velvet-brocades and the gleam and glitter of precious stones everywhere.

I seemed to be reclining on a rock—and to rest at last after the unrest of a whole life.

Koil came to me with some refreshments, and I asked her to hand me the album. Instantly I saw that the loose leaves it contained dated from Akbar's time, even if none of them represented scenes from the old epics of Hind or from any imperial adventure. Most of them were coloured sketches. But, lo! here was a small masterpiece of Daswant, the palanquin-bearer. At such a moment it came to me like a gift. In the background lay a castle with a tower and an encircling wall beneath glittering mountains in rose-colour; did this glitter come from the pink crystal, which is said to shine on the mountains of Rājasthan?

The rosy sheen melted into the pale gold of the evening-sky. A road wound upward to the castle, every turn seeming to entice the wanderer to seek those regions of light high above him.

But in the foreground lay a woman—and she looked like a bride—glancing upward. Never can I forget the fire in her eye. Her right arm was lifted high, pointing a sword at her left arm. Behind her, soldiers in full armour prepared a pyre.

I called Koil to my side ; she was a daughter of Hind. “ What does this mean ? ” I asked. She looked at the picture for a while before she turned her eyes on me. They shone as through a mist of tears.

“ Korumdevi, the chieftain’s daughter,” she said in a subdued, trembling voice. “ It is long ago now, more than a hundred years. One day she saw the strongest man she had ever seen—a chieftain from another country—love overtook her, and she chose him as her husband. But her father had already promised her to a prince. He was the Rāja of Mundore, and with an armed force he attacked the nuptial party on their way to the chieftain’s castle : the bridegroom fought bravely for his happiness, but fell. Then Korumdevi herself cut off her right arm and ordered it to be sent to the bridegroom’s father, whom she had never seen, with the words : ‘ Such was thy daughter.’ The other arm with the bridal jewels

she let a soldier cut off and send to her own home. After that she mounted the funeral pyre. Such are the women in Rājasthan, lady ! ”

I was left alone and buried my face in the silk cushions. Korumdevi's scorching glance haunted me and suddenly it struck me, here in Akbar's zenāna, that I was a dweller in a strange land. Had he not sought in vain to mix the blood of Hind with ours ? They remained themselves, and we remained ourselves.

“ Such are the women in Rājasthan ! ”
The woman who could ascend a burning pyre—as if it were a throne—in order to atone for the sins of her husband and follow him through flaming fire into eternity would also know how to hate the foreign woman, who would share her happiness, no doubt, but would never die with her. How she, the mother of his sons, would hate me. . . .

As the tidal wave sinks back, when no longer attracted by the moon, so my heart sank within me, when all the glory round my love was darkened by anguish. Where were they now, the flying squadrons of Timūr and all my proud self-confidence ?

I wept as I had not wept since the death of my mother. Then it seemed to me that the ground was sliding away under my feet ; now it was as if the world were standing still at some awful

command, and as if all life were holding its breath awaiting the final doom.

For both the future of Hind and all my happiness depended on my Rakhibandbhai.

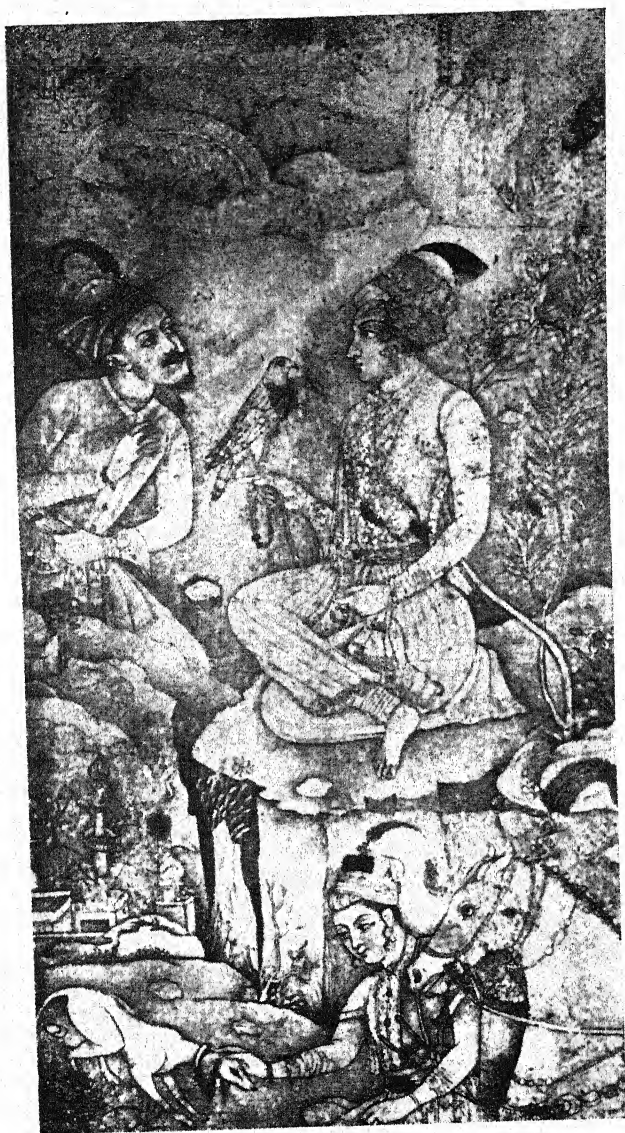
I cried myself to sleep and was awakened by the clatter of horses' hoofs ; it sounded nearer and nearer from the road to Agra. Then it suddenly died away.

But now I was again in the living city of Akbar ! I almost expected the stone door leading to the next room to revolve on its pivot and reveal him to my gaze. . . .

For the sound of horses at full gallop had quickened my pulse again ; surely it was the Rajputs sweeping onward to save Hind ! Mothers like the women in Rājasthan beget heroes. And was it true, as Koil had just said, that I was still as beautiful as in my younger days ? . . .

I stretched out my hand for the album. It seemed to attract me like a magnet.

As I opened the cover another sketch fell out. It was meant to show how Krishna could be near everyone of his thousands of gopīs all at once—and alone ; shedding a light of godliness round Rukmini, sleeping with Kalindi, sporting with Satyā—as the grace of God comes to everyone



THE YOUNG AKBAR RECEIVES THE NEWS OF HIS
FATHER'S DEATH

Mogul Miniature

who seeks it. Behind the sketch was written :
"Thou makest Thy servant poor, for the poor
remember Thee always."

In a niche Koil had put a mirror, betel and a vase of red paste for my nails, as if I were going to a sweet tryst. Well, I was on my way to meet someone, Salīm Chishti in his grave in the Jāma Masjid of Fathpur. But all my jewels I left behind, except the chain with the amulet containing the letter ; as one of the poor would I approach the holy man, who once sat here in his cave without goods or gold, but with the power of keeping wild beasts away and attracting human beings to his presence.

"Thou makest Thy servant poor." Was it from the poverty in Salīm Chishti's cave that the inspiration to create a Fathpur Sikri had emanated ? And did beauty become the enemy of the power which dwells in poverty ? I looked around me. Here that power still reigned.

My brother Aurangzeb made caps ; as a poor fākir he sold them. For he coveted power but feared beauty.

My father loved magnificence : he was richer than Akbar. But had the old force lived on in him ? . . .

On my return to Agra I would give away many elephants and horses, so that sick people might

ride to the mosque and temple services ; I would set free slaves and slave-girls and ten thousands of dinars should be given to the poorest, that wealth itself might take away some of the evil from which my father suffered.

I walked towards the Jāma Masjīd and came to the simple dwellings of wazir Abul Fazl and his brother Faizi. How much Akbar's empire and the Dīn-Ilāhī owed to these men ! I moved on slowly, my head bowed in reverence, and mounted the staircase to Faizi's little house, as if the court poet still sat in it, reading aloud to his lord some legend about Krishna or some poem of Nazir-i-Khusrau.

Bitter to outward seeming, like the sea is the scripture's page,
But precious as pearls of price is the inward sense to the sage.
Down in the depths of the ocean are gems and pearls galore ;
Seek then a skilful diver, and bid farewell to the shore.

I remembered something that had been told me about Faizi ; though no one wrote poems like him, he never asked anything for himself, but wrote entreating the emperor to show favour to a man who, as he well knew, hated him : " I pray this for the sake of the pure spirits who surround the throne of grace and for the sake of all the saints who join in the chorus of the morning hymns on earth."

Then I went to Abul Fazl's abode, to greet him on his own ground.

Here sat the wazir, deep in his researches and the writings in which he showed that the one God rose above the manifold gods of Hind, yea, that He embodied them all in Himself. Therefore the shedding of this people's blood should be stopped "at least for a season," and "the thorns of animosity be transformed into a flowery meadow of peace."

O God, in every temple I see people that seek Thee, and in every language I hear spoken people praise Thee !
Polytheism and Islām feel after Thee,
Each religion says, "Thou art one, without equal !"
If it be a mosque, people murmur the holy prayer, and if it be a Christian church, people ring the bell from love to Thee.

So spake Abul Fazl, he who was to have become a wandering sage visiting the holy men of Mongolia and the hermits of Lebanon. Instead of that he raised his lord to the high position of God's Khalif. But with jealous perfidy, Salīm, the emperor's son, cut his head off. In deep sorrow Akbar kept vigil and fasted ; rather would he had sacrificed his own head than let his friend be killed for the sake of one who coveted the crown of Hind. . . .

The stones on which I was walking seemed to turn into the many sins of our race ; was this the ground upon which I had to wend my way through life ? Suddenly there seemed to be blood on one

of the stones under my foot, and I trembled ; was Akbar also guilty ? . . .

Through the King's gate I entered the courtyard of the Jāma Masjīd. The sun began to sink and dyed the red sandstone crimson : against this background Salīm Chishti's marble shrine shone with a pearl-white lustre. Now it no longer seemed to me that disciples thronged the colonnades ; nor were any going in holiday-garb to service in the livān ; I alone was there, a lonely pilgrim to the great Saint's grave.

The walls round the small sanctuary are like those round the cenotaph of Akbar—a row of large windows in perforated white marble, so artistically wrought that it made me think of the costliest lace from the monasteries in Firangistan. Is there in all Hind another monument to the dead as beautifully conceived as this ? An emperor's homage to a saint.

I ascended the few steps leading to the entrance. Over the door hung a silver horseshoe, placed there by Akbar ; it recalled to my thoughts the clatter of horses' hoofs I had just heard—making me dream of rajputs urging on thousands of steeds in their armies at full speed to rescue my father ! At the same moment I remembered that there was a sentence on the wall inside—carved in golden letters—praying God to punish our heathen

enemies. But among those whom our faith calls infidels were many who feared God and who could keep watch over our empire. . . .

Space is to infinity what time is to eternity. Now I crept into a room where I was sheltered against the whole world—into the heart of my childhood's faith. There a spirit whispered, not to all the world, but to me alone. As God's wing protects the egg of the world, I seemed to be conscious that angels' wings came down from the throne of Allāh to cover the dome of Salīm Chishti's tomb.

One does not gain access immediately to the holy of holies : a square vestibule like a colonnade runs round the room containing the cenotaph. Here the daylight filters through the perforated windows of the outer walls ; in a subdued golden light red water-lilies and poppies glowed in vases of gold, painted on the white marble of the inner walls. I thought I was standing in one of the forecourts of Paradise. And the memory of many golden hours in my life gleamed before my inner vision like steps leading to the heavenly garden of bliss, where " the rivers run like chains of light "

. . .

Now I pushed the door to the inner room softly ajar : it was like the change from sundown to dusk, for here the light only comes through the

three lattice windows which look out on the vestibule. But on each side of the windows twinkle faithfully-burning lamps.

"On the fields of Eternity have I gathered a wealth of roses." These words came back to me as I looked at the flowers which are painted in the most delicate colours everywhere on the walls and in the recesses of the windows, even seeming to fill the room with a sublimated fragrance, as if they had been pressed flowers from the garden of Eden, where the hosts of the peris live on perfume. . . .

But the finest sight in this room is the canopy on its four pillars, all covered with wondrously beautiful work in mother-of-pearl and ebony. In the dim death-chamber the mother-of-pearl gleamed like tears from human eyes; my heart brimmed over and I sank on my knees, leaning my head against the sarcophagus.

Ah, was not the whole world a grave-yard of buried possibilities, of seeds springing up, only to crumble into dust? A furious elephant, crushing under his foot every living thing he meets on his way—such was the cruelty of human creatures one towards another. And I saw how the woe of the world piled up in waves, blood-red against the sky, and the sun was hidden by clouds; but suddenly a golden radiance lit up space and thither the waves could not reach . . .

“ Rise like Muhammed to Heaven and see the mighty works of the Lord.” And I beheld the white woollen mantle of the prophet, trailing in the dust—just as I had seen it when I was a child ; trembling hands stretched out after it, thousands of men sought to catch hold of it, to follow the prophet to the Mount of Illumination. . . .

I lifted my head. The mother-of-pearl gleamed again in the dusk like human eyes filled with tears. But now it seemed to shine with gratitude to all prophets and saints who had tried to lead us pitiable mortals out of the vale of woe. And my lips uttered a prayer into the silence : Oh God, gather thou in Heaven all the happiness irretrievably lost in this world, and give it purified back to us in another . . .

Did I hear steps outside in the passage ? Silence again. But now I distinctly heard someone walking outside. I rose and noticed at the same moment that the door was being opened. I turned my head. A flood of light burst in through the open doorway. And in that light stood a tall warrior in a white turban—my Rakhibandbhai !

So great was my astonishment that it turned to profound tranquillity. Such things can happen. As if it had been revealed to me from some spiritual source I felt convinced that I had lived many

times before on earth, and that everything good I might have been or done before had reached its fullness at this moment, when I was not only the Princess Jahānarā but a soul belonging to Eternity.

Then I tore the veil from my face and looked him straight in the eyes. Instantly I knew what I never had known, saw what I never had seen—he had never written the letter I had received, and he had never had mine! My brother Aurangzeb had forged the one and destroyed the other. . . .

Serenely he looked back at me with an expression—oh, how full of innocence! But then a sudden change passed over his countenance; his features trembled, the blood rose and fell, the eyes changed colour . . .

For one moment we had risen high above the life of every day; now we had become dizzy, and something told us that we must seek firmer ground. I drew my veil quickly over my face. "My Rakhibandbhai," I said in a low voice. It broke the spell.

He saluted me as once before, on the day he rode to the darbar. But now as he lifted his hand up to his forehead, I saw that it trembled, and as he crossed his arms over his breast his eyes sought the mother-of-pearl on the canopy. . . .

No woman was allowed to enter this holy of

holies ; but Jahānarā Begam had obtained permission. And now the room seemed holier to me than ever.

Outside in the vestibule lay a carpet on which the shaikhs used to squat, reading out of the Korān to the pilgrims who constantly thronged in and out of the sanctuary. But now we were the only pilgrims. I asked the Rao to sit down on the carpet—seating myself at a little distance from it—for I felt convinced that his message was of so serious a nature that it befitted the silence round a tomb.

The Rao made clear to me at once that the future of Hind might depend on our meeting. In order to find me he had spurred his horse—now I knew whence the sound of clattering hoofs had come ! My royal father had this very day made up his mind to confront his rebellious sons, carried at the head of his army ; but Prince Dārā would not hear of it, having been induced by Shāyishta Khan and Khalīlullah Khan to oppose the plan. These two arch-traitors had made the Crown Prince believe that if the emperor showed himself to his troops the glory of victory would be his and not his son's, and that Dārā would thus lose the opportunity Fate was giving him to show his brilliant capacities as commander-in-chief ! Alas ! A thousand times alas ! My brother, how easily you were led astray !

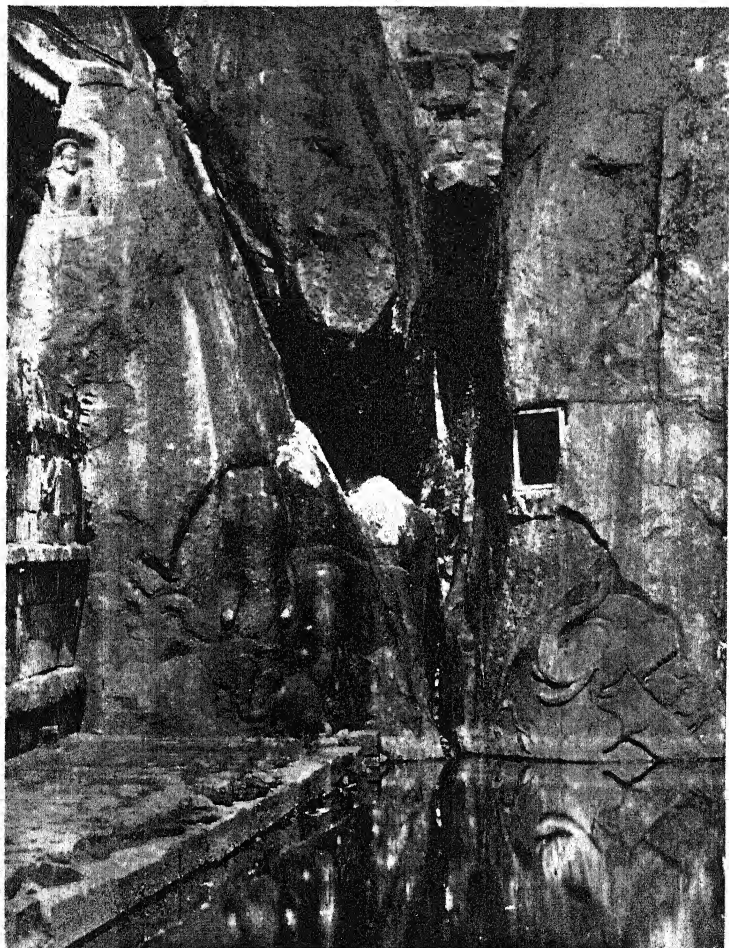
In all Hind, said the Rao, I alone could open the prince's eyes. And this must be done already on the morrow.

How I longed to see the sky above our heads, longed to get out into the open air. Every minute was precious. And I determined to try and find a small pavilion in one of Fathpur's forlorn gardens, where we might continue our secret discourse.

I drove in advance in my carriage. I recognised the pavilion immediately : what had once been a garden round it was now a meadow, but a whole little field of lilies was still left near the road leading up to the mound upon which it stands.

Above a spring which wells up at the foot of the mound two mango-trees bend towards each other ; they were planted there for the religious ceremony which is celebrated in the gardens of Hind—the wedding of the two finest young trees by a well to ensure the fruitfulness of the garden. Here I would stop and await my brother-knight.

He came. As he approached, throwing open a gate, he caught sight of me. He stood still a moment ; his glance rested on me, so full of brightness that the atmosphere around me seemed to oscillate with light, and smiling back at him I



ANURADHAPURA



remembered something I had read in an old Hindu book about some hero : “ He seemed to herald the coming of an age of Kāma, to produce a cosmos of moonlight, to create a living world of that which smiles are made of, to conjure up a day of love imperturbable, to inaugurate a kingdom of heart and soul”

As a climbing plant puts forth new leaves at the approach of spring, so love grew anew in my heart.

“ Allāhu Akbar ! ” I greeted him.

“ Jalla Jallāluhū ! ” he answered quickly.

In the pavilion the marble bench and the fixed table were still in their old places ; the Rao laid some papers on the table. And now we were sitting in our Divān-i-Khās !

First I wished to know the full truth concerning the letters. And it was exactly as I had imagined—the Rao had neither received any letter from me, nor written any. We soon saw the chain of events clearly. But this matter had engendered shyness between us.

Afterwards my Rakhibandbhai told me about his flight from Aurangzeb. When the imperial command ordered the Rao to appear before the Presence, my brother did all he could to prevent him from leaving the Dekhan. But the Hara Prince broke through every barrier, gathered other faithful Rajput princes round him and crossed the

Nerbadda river which was dangerously in flood. Aurangzeb's men pursued the fugitives, but dared not attack them.

Then came the news that Aurangzeb had won over our brother Mūrād to side with him in his plot. The Rao asked permission to read aloud a copy of a letter written by Prince Aurangzeb to Prince Mūrād at the beginning of the rebellion. The younger brother had proudly shown this letter to all the leaders in his own army to encourage them, and to the richest merchants in order to get the money he required from them. I still have the copy in my possession.

“Be it known to the mighty Prince Mūrād Bakhsh that I have received word that Prince Dārā has killed our father by poison, and has taken over the government, meaning to assume the title of emperor. For this cause Prince Shāh Shujāh marched with a powerful army, intending to secure the throne and avenge himself on Prince Dārā. This fact has forced me to write this letter, to let you know that there is no one, no other prince except yourself, worthy to be emperor of the Mogul Empire. Dārā is an infidel and an idolater, a destroyer of the Mahomedan faith; Prince Shāh Shujāh is a heretic, following the sect of Ali, and thus opposed to our faith; whilst my zeal for the Korān requires me to devote all my strength to the

task of making you emperor of the whole empire. For, as everybody knows, it is a long time since I renounced the world and made a solemn vow to end my days at Mecca. All that I ask of you is a sincere statement, supported by an oath on the Korān, that after I, relying on the strength of Allāh, have seated you on the throne and made you absolute sovereign, you will be pleased to take compassion on my family, and cherish them for my sake with paternal love. If you give me your word, swearing on the Korān thus to act, I promise to use all my strength, devices, and ingenuity, and to make every possible effort to seat you on the throne of Delhi. As a guarantee of what I say here, I send you one hundred thousand rupees, in order to establish between us a firm and perpetual union and friendship, being brothers, as we are, of one father and one faith, and both defenders of the Korān. Therewith I conclude, awaiting your arrival.

Your faithful brother, Aurangzeb."

I bowed my head low in shame and uttered a heartrending cry of woe. Oh, what infamy! What a dishonour for our whole family! And to such a ruler the old heroic tribes of Hind were to be forced to give up their country! A tiger lurked in Aurangzeb's heart as it had done in Timūr's, but never should the glory round Timūr's name shine round the head of Aurangzeb . . .

The Rao understood me. There was silence in the pavilion, but when he again began to speak, his voice had a deeper ring than before. He had risen from the bench and paced to and fro on the floor. "Our rulers have transformed our countries into an empire, and when discord arises within the ruling family, we princes of Rājasthan have no choice but to lend our support to him who best can keep the whole kingdom united. Ever since the days of Chandragupta Maurya or Harsha we warriors have cherished one and the same dream—Hind under one canopy. No foreign ruler ever equalled Akbar the great! He did not long to return to the land of his fathers, to Samarkand and Bokhara, as Sultan Bābur and Sultan Humayūn had done before him, but on the plains of Hind he built up a kingdom which was to contain in it everything that was best in all countries. For he believed in us, he founded his hopes on us, he *became* one of us. . . .

If no one has been like him, whose seat is in the highest heavens, no one has been what Prince Aurangzeb will *become*, if he gets the power. He hates the people of Hind"

Now I dared to glance at the Rao. His eyes, which could look so calmly out into space, suddenly became like those of an eagle, seeking to burst open its cage; the scintillating pupils moved with

lightning swiftness. As he stood there before me he was the most lordly figure I had ever seen ; as if he had risen from the fire-fountain on Mount Abū, conjured up by Vishnu himself in the god's own image.

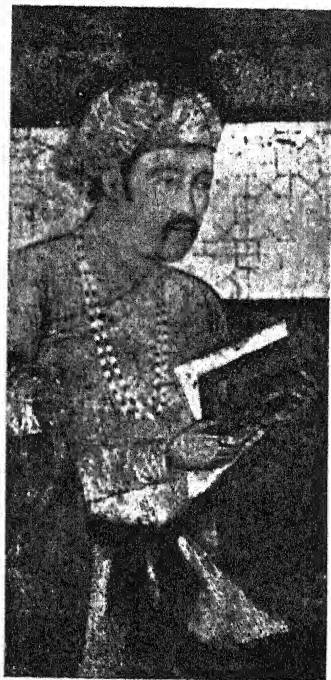
" He hates us," he continued in a hushed voice. " We are well enough for carrying out his schemes—he does not despise our fearlessness—but he hates the faith of our fathers ! Prince Aurangzeb likes to keep heaven to himself," a smile played round his lips, " alone with those who would shut up the world between the two covers of the Al Korān ! The emperor Jahāngīr and His Majesty Shāhjahān have venerated the same book, but have understood it in such a manner that their Hindu subjects have felt safe under their sceptre. Prince Aurangzeb mistakes himself for his God and therefore permits himself to play chess with his kinsmen as the pieces. No move seems to him too dishonourable in his struggle to win the game. . . . And if he wins it, all that flourished under Akbar's benign sway will languish ; Hind will again sink into torpor—perhaps for many hundred years. . . . "

" Never shall he win the game ! " I ejaculated. The anguish which had melted away in Salīm Chishti's sanctuary and in the presence of the Rao seized me anew. We seemed to stand on a high

tower rocked to and fro by the wind on a tottering foundation ; beneath it yawned a fathomless abyss. . . .

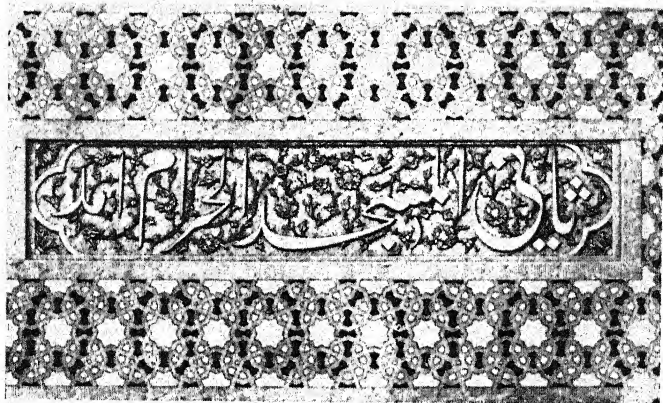
Then I told the Rao how Prince Aurangzeb in his youth had been invited by the Crown Prince to an entertainment, together with our father and the other two brothers. Dārā had made for himself a cool subterranean chamber with the river running close by and many mirrors from Aleppo in it. This room he wished to show. Several times he went in and out himself ; but Prince Aurangzeb seated himself near the only door and would not go farther into the room. Finally he got up and disappeared altogether. When he heard that the Emperor was highly displeased with his behaviour, he confessed later on that he had been afraid lest the Crown Prince might shut them all in. “ But it is he who would like to shut us all in,” I exclaimed. “ All except Roshānarā ! ”

The Rao sat down again on the bench, and now he told me how a spy from court had succeeded in finding out that my sister constantly sent letters to Prince Aurangzeb ; without these he would not have been able to organise his rebellion so quickly. “ The zenāna-curtains shelter the women from us,” said the Rao, “ but her weapons behind those draperies are apt to be more dangerous than ours.”



AKBAR

Miniature, probably from 1577. Portrait



ORNAMENT IN THE LĪVĀN IN THE JĀMA MASJĪD,
FATHPUR SIKRI



Glowing with indignation against all the deceit around us, I burst out : “ Oh, if I also could go out and join in the war like the Queen of Gurrha or like Chand Bibī, when they took the field against the Emperor Akbar ! Aye, like Nūr Mahāl Begam of my own kindred, when she crossed the river on her elephant to release the emperor Jahāngīr, her lord, from imprisonment . . . ”

Then the Rao rose, and his clenched fist fell so heavily on the table that I thought it would crack the marble slab.

“ Prince Aurangzeb has declared that even if Timūr-i-Lang with his whole offspring came marching against him he would not yield an inch. Nor will the emperor’s men of Hind yield—if the prince attempts to cut his way to the throne, a carpet of saffron and blood shall be spread for his feet. . . . ”

“ Methinks I see them, the long line of my forefathers who held their own against Islām from the time it first invaded this country ! At the head of them all goes Manika Rai, not long after the prophet’s death, and legends about his deeds still live on in Būndi. Then Goga Chohan and his forty-six sons fell when Mahmūd of Ghazni came to rob Hind. . . . ”

“ They sped towards the sword’s glistening edge as if it had been a place of pilgrimage,” said I,

quoting Chand, the bard of the Chohans. At this moment I hated Mahmūd of Ghazni.

The Rao seemed to feel it ; his countenance lighted up and animated by my words, he continued,

“Nor have they fallen in vain ! When did we warriors of Hind force ourselves into other countries, violating mosques ? But in the name of a most holy God the roads of Rājasthan have been turned into rivers of blood throughout the ages and one temple after another has been pillaged and pulled down throughout this land of Hind. What did Mahmūd take away from Nagarkot—where a holy flame rose out of the ground—from the great and wonderful Somnath ? Vast treasures heaped up by the princes of Hind during many centuries. And at the bottom of our lakes and rivers marble statues, hurled into the depths from our sanctuaries, lie like pallid dreaming corpses of whole tribes that have been wiped out . . .”

The Rao gazed out into space again, as if seeking something very far away. I felt sad. Then his lordly pride awoke in him.

“It was a Chohan—King of Ajmir—who forced Mahmūd to give up the siege of his capital and retreat ; thus ended the mighty Sultan’s last great raid upon Hind. But the king fell.

“More than a century passed, then came the fatal calamity—the eternal shame of Hind ! When

the king of Kanauj enticed Muhammed of Ghor to invade the country in order to destroy Prithvi Rāja, king of Ajmir and Delhi—the last emperor of Hind's own people. But Kanauj also was involved in the disaster, and after these two great countries had fallen to the enemy, a foreign stamp was impressed upon the face of Hind unto this day. . . .”

“Sanyogin,” I whispered so softly that I could hardly hear the word myself, and I felt my cheek blush under the veil. But he had heard it. When the Rao was moved and the blood left his face, his skin grew darker instead of turning pale—I had noticed it before. And now it seemed as if a shadow had been thrown across his countenance, but the eyes shone.

“To a Prithvi Rāja Sanyogin meant more than worldly power, therefore he lost his crown and his life. How often love—or honour alone—has driven us Rajputs to take the field! Tear off a piece of the veil that covers your head, Princess, and bind it round my wrist that I may wear it in the battle! See, far away on the plain something still remains of the emperor Akbar's Akāśdiyah, which he built high to give light to the warriors seeking to find their way home to Fathpur in the evening. As the bracelet-bound brother of Begam Sāhib I shall remember it in warring against that

spirit in Islām, which I—like so many of my forefathers—will stake all to combat ! For her honour is also mine ! ”

He honoured me as before ! Now I could breathe freely again.

I tied a piece of my turquoise-coloured veil round his wrist. But first my lips had touched it.

The time was slipping by and perchance it was my fate that this half-day should outweigh my whole life. . . .

Therefore I must enjoy the loveliness of Nature alone with my Rakhibandbhai. As the sun sank lower and lower a deep rose-coloured flush spread over the earth—as if we had been out walking at sunrise. All round the sinking globe the heavens were as mother-of-pearl within its shell ; and nearer at hand the clouds flamed purple and gold as if they had caught fire. The mist that came floating towards us from the plain had also caught fire in the rays of the sun—surely we were walking in the rosy light of the streets of Paradise !

Between oleander and coral-trees the road led to the dried-up pond where the emperor Bābur used to row—or sit on the raised platform in the middle—when this place was nothing but a village called Sikri. I walked to the platform and sat

down there ; the Rao seated himself on one of the steps leading up to it.

I spoke of the generals who in their hearts were at one with Aurangzeb and about those who had already gone over to him, Mir Jumlah, Najābat Khan . . . then, as the Rao suddenly leaned forward, as if he had caught sight of something far away, I descried a couple of beautiful pearls in a pearl-necklace half buried in the folds of his turban. I restrained an ejaculation of joy ; it must be my gift !

“ Look, Begam Sāhib,” said he with a new and strange ring in his voice, “ yonder is the slope on the other side of the plain, where the emperor Bābur and Rāna Sanga fought. . . .”

But my heart could no longer bear to hear about all this carnage, the blood with which my own brethren in the faith had flooded Hind. “ Ah, would that this battle were the last to be fought for land or crown,” I interrupted, “ and that my brother Dārā could ride into Fathpur to celebrate a festival of peace ! ”

“ The city that was built during the last Sakka of Chitor,” he answered, as if in defiance. “ After all, it was with blood that the emperor Akbar cemented his kingdom together, and with blood it must still be kept united. He dreamed that it might be done by his new faith. But as the

dominion of Timūr Beg declined quickly after his death on account of its vast size, so the dream of the emperor Akbar was too great to be realised by all these millions of little souls—and we still live on the ruins of that dream. . . .”

I began to feel uneasy. “He loved the people of Hind,” I said, for it was indispensable for me to realise that we had a foundation, on which both of us could stand. “And he wedded the daughters of Rājasthan. . . .”

“He did not always honour them,” he answered hoarsely. “In Rājasthan people still speak of how the emperor sought to seduce Prithvi Rāja’s wife—Prithvi Rāj, who wrote to Pertap that the hope of the Hindu rests on the Hindu; how he sought to entice her during a Nauroza-festival to be unfaithful to her lord. And rather than that the rāni drew her dagger to take her own life”

The pride of my race quickened my pulse, and I rose. “If ever there was a man for whose sake I would have hazarded the eternal bliss, that man was the great emperor of Hind,” said I. My blood grew hot. “I would have flung away the dagger for a single glance from his eye!”

The Rao’s face darkened and he cast down his eyes, my words had stung him to the quick. My heart softened. “Had I not, like the consort of

Prithvi Rāja, been wedded to a prince of Rāja-
sthan”

Now the fire in the clouds was extinguished, and the sun wrapped in a thin, white mist. But just before sinking it rose again an instant above the horizon, and like a gigantic molten diamond it flashed forth a beam of light—and we both stood as if glorified in its last rays. The Rao looked up—and smiled. Perhaps my veil was so thin, that he could see that I was smiling too.

“Forgive me, princess,” he said. “A thought awoke the warrior in me just now. I am your slave again, and the vassal of the emperor Akbar!”

With his lips he touched the new amulet around his wrist.

My plan of stopping in Fathpur till cock-crow did not please the Rao. The atmosphere was full of turbulence. He decided therefore that he would not leave the place before dawn. His men should lodge in the rooms on the ground-floor of my small palace, and the prince himself would take the room upstairs, under the other cupola.

Our next meeting took place in the palace. The eunuch had prepared a simple repast for our honoured guest in the finest room on the ground-floor. But as this day had taken me outside time

and place and the custom of centuries, I would myself offer my Rakhibandbhai the fruits I had brought with me. To the corner, formed by two outer walls on the big verandah outside the room I occupied, Koil had carried out the earthen vessel with the champaka-flowers and the green cushions. She had found musk-scented candles in high chandeliers and these she lit on both sides of the flower-bowl. On a small low table we placed water-melons and golden grapes from Bābur's garden in Kabul; guava, mango and pistachio-nuts, also candied dates and apricots from Basra and Irān. A flask of gold held precious wine—"the red tears from Shirāz."

Shy as a maiden on her way to meet her chosen one for the first time, I took a few flowers from the bowl and inserted them behind one of my ears. And again I adorned myself with the jewels I had so recently been ready to sacrifice. . . .

Now he stood in the doorway. His countenance was always new to me; his features bore the impress of fierce struggles and invincible will-power; at one moment they were lit up by the smile of a youth, at another his glance deepened into such solemnity that it almost frightened me.

Taking the place I assigned to him, he kept his eyes cast down. We sat on either side of the

verandah-corner in a square, shallow niche in the wall. Above our heads were smaller and deeper, arched niches. Sitting there, the lights before him—immovable, unfathomable, moulded in the course of generations into golden bronze by the sun—he looked like an image of the deified Rāma. We sat quite near each other, yet an invisible abyss separated us ; all life around us, thousands of years behind us. . . .

“What do you feel, when you kill so many men ? ” something made me ask all of a sudden. And I handed him my own small goblet, set with emeralds.

He put down the goblet without touching the wine, and glanced steadily out into space. “If we Rajputs had not known how to wield the sword there would have been no Rājasthan and no Mogul empire would have continued to exist. But, Princess, he who kills and he who gets killed, both drift onward down the river we call Life. The river seeks the sea ; life seeks continuity beyond every limit in perpetual reciprocity between the Creator and His creation.

No other gain than a man's honour have I sought when I have fought for the emperor and taken men's lives. And on the day I fall in battle I shall have accomplished a warrior's duty on earth.”

Anguish seized me again : now I feared that I would lose my brother-knight. "Who amongst us desires perpetual change?" said I, almost to myself, revolting against the Fate which drives us on in the current of the stream. "Do we not all yearn for permanence?"

The Rao's countenance shone with inexpressible mildness. "On a stone in Nadole," he said, "there is a very old inscription about the Hara-prince Alan Deva. 'When he ascended the throne,' it is written, 'he understood that this world is a fable, that riches are like dew-drops on the lotus-leaf, bearing for one moment the semblance of a pearl before they vanish.' But those dew-drops of celestial bliss which are measured out to us in this world, Jahānarā Begam, are they not evidence, that the current runs towards seas of blessedness. . . ?"

He seemed almost to caress the goblet he held in his hand.

My heart brimmed over ; I could not answer. Then, apparently, reverting to my first question, he went on without looking at me :

"Long ago there lived a king, who would not kill. The great Aśoka. Everything he did in this world was intended to count in the next world also. The stillness in his soul was like the glass of a mirror, reflecting the flame of Life in a windless

place." And now he, too, spoke as if to himself. "He would not kill. But that was why he left ajar the door to Aryavarta. And the enemy from the north stepped in and killed. . . ."

I had listened attentively to every word he spoke, but only at a later time did I fully understand what they meant. At this moment I was too happy to think of anything but himself, as he sat before me in his white turban and white khilat, fitting closely to his limbs—round his waist a broad scarf of kinkab, with silver lilies on a golden ground.

Now the stars had gathered together in a great host, as if not one of them would forget to shed its light upon our heads. But the star that shone nearest and most brilliantly had already moved on a little between two trees in the zenāna-garden below—ah, if I could have stopped it in its course, as it measured out time! The blood rushed to my heart, there were so many things I still wished to say. I sat on the threshold of Paradise, but in heavy fetters, so that I could not move one foot to enter it.

Again we spoke of the morrow—of the Pādishāh and of Dārā. The star had reached the next tree and vanished. I rose, knowing that he had to leave.

His farewell greeting was after the manner of Akbar: he cast himself down prostrate on the

floor, touching it with his forehead with such lithe grace and dignity that this might have been his customary form of salutation. But it was not his last homage. Now he stood with raised head before me.

"Princess," he said—how distinctly I hear his voice!—"when no message from you reached me and I thought I was forgotten, I still retained in my heart the image my dreams had formed of you, of her whom I had never seen—and to that image my soul was true. Now that I have seen you"—he was silent for a moment—"now that I again have heard you speak, nothing but Fate can withstand Chattar Sāl!"

He crossed his arms on his breast and walked quickly away.

I went back to my green cushion in the niche, saw how the lights flickered in the wind before his empty place, took some champaka-flowers out of the urn, tore a silver-thread out of my veil and began to make a wreath, as I had done that night on my terrace in Delhi. But now the heavens were higher still, and the stars fused their gold into a sea of misty green light.

What would become of the rose, for whose sake the smart of a thousand thorns must first be

endured ? I seemed to move in a new and strange world, as in a dream where everything is transfigured only to be intensified. And our souls seemed like lakes, united at a mystic source.

Then the moon rose from the mist over the plain, as radiant as the face of a bride, when the veil is lifted ; the night was nearly as bright as day. And what was left of the lake shone like a golden bridge leading to the land of the holy. I hung the half-finished wreath on my arm and walked to the parapet. The mists seemed to form themselves into legions, marching towards Fathpur—they became all the rajputs who had fallen under the sceptre of the Timūrites in Hind. They came from the battlefields of Akbar and Jahāngīr, from Balkh and from Ujjain. No longer were they bloody, no longer in saffron-coloured garb, but shining white as they came to fetch a secret message. . . . And the moon was their Akāśdiyah.

Involuntarily I looked to the right, where a small roofed balcony jutted out from the Rao's room a little farther from the wall than my open verandah. There stood the Rao.

Kneeling by the stone parapet I dared hardly breathe, lest he should notice my presence. And still every fibre of my being trembled with longing that he might turn his face to me !

But he stood motionless, his glance glided out into space as if seeking a far-off goal ; nevertheless I could see that a fire burned deep in his eyes.

To him it was that the white legions were coming ; in the approaching conflict they would surround him, bringing us help from their world of light. . . .

He turned and went in. The wind put out one of the candles. Now anguish once more stole into my blood ; my limbs trembled. Suddenly I saw them all—my brother Dārā, overbearing and impatient, Aurangzeb with his black, unyielding eye, Mūrād with his strong arm—and my sick father. And I was only a woman !

I returned to my room. Koil slept on a mat near one of the doors. The next led to the Rao's room. Should I never see him again ? Should everyone else take his time before the battle, without leaving a minute for me ? And nothing had really been said between us—nothing. I stole to the door, caressing it with my hands.

How it came to pass I know not yet, but the door swung on its pivot, and like a sleep-walker I passed into the other room. . . .

On a panther-skin in front of the door lay the Rao without his turban, the moonlight flooding his face—never had I seen him so beautiful. Had not a smile of the living played round his lips, he would

have seemed to sleep the sleep eternal. And the flowers on my arm sent a wave of perfume across the room. . . .

I had slipped over the threshold from the wide-awake world of day to the mysterious world of night, as a landscape changes its aspect in moonlight. Softly I sank down beside him, my body resting heavily against the stone-floor, my head concealed in a fold of his mantle. Now it seemed to me as if I were again sinking, sinking, exactly as I had done on that night in the Moonlight-garden—but this time I sank into a sea of bliss, where I reached the depths of that peace which passeth all understanding. One minute of my life was destined to sum up a thousand nights of perfect felicity. . . .

I heard a noise, as of something rustling against the wall of the house—footsteps walking away and returning. I sat up. The Rao moved his head and sighed heavily in his sleep.

Quickly and quietly I arose ; so soon chased out of paradise ! And not till I found myself back in my own room again—with throbbing temples and fear clutching at my heart—did I notice that my half-finished wreath had been left behind. . . .

Was it a bat that had flown against the wall ? And the footsteps. . . . But now I had no more strength to bear either bliss, or agony, or

fear ; I flung myself down among the cushions on the carpet in the corner and fell into a heavy sleep.

At dawn I was awakened by the sound of a scream that pierced the air. Koil, who entered the room immediately afterwards, brought the news that the men whom Hāzir had appointed to be the night-watch, had killed an innocent man, thinking he was going to force his way into the palace.

I hardly listened, hardly felt any compassion ; it merely occurred to me that the murdered man was the one who was guilty of having frightened me in the night. But the sound of his loud cry of pain echoed in my ear.

"And the Rao ?" I asked. He had ridden away with his men at daybreak.

Before I went down to my coach I looked into the Rao's room to see whether the wreath was there. It was not. Had it become a new link between us ?

But how should I dare to greet him again? . . .

Just as we had driven past Naubat Khāna we came upon a funeral procession ; I understood that it was a poor Hindu who was being taken to the river to be burned. Something made me bid the drivers stop and get Hāzir to ask who the dead man was. The one who was killed some hours



MOGUL MINIATURE (ILLUSTRATION TO A FAERY TALE)

(School of Akbar)

ago, was the answer ; he was a man of little understanding but with a good voice, and he wished to sing to the Pādshāh Begam at dawn of day. On this account his life had been taken. And it was supposed that he had stolen a precious bracelet which he wore on his bosom, but his mother who followed the corpse weeping, knew that he never stole, but only gave away. I called her to me, bade Hāzir write an order that she should keep the bracelet I had given her son, and gave her another.

But this man's death weighed heavily on my mind as an ill omen.

On my return to Agra the whole atmosphere quivered with excitement, as when the air seems to pant over the earth on a hot day. One was building castles in the air of proud anticipations, while another prophesied chaos. . . .

And all sorts of rumours—false or true—came flying into the city like a swarm of locusts. We heard that Aurangzeb and Mūrād Baksh considered themselves invincible ; that their soldiers boasted of the victory at Ujjain, declaring that when they had conquered the empire they would be ready to march against Persia and Turkey. . . . No one kept his head clear—unless he belonged to the traitors. And of such there

were thousands, according to Aurangzeb, in our father's army.

As I was preparing to visit my brother Dārā, a letter was delivered to me. It was from Chattar Sāl. In a few hurried lines he told me that my brother had threatened to plunge his dagger into his chest before the eyes of the Pādishāh, unless he alone were placed in command of the troops ; and the Rao believed that it was quite hopeless to change my father's decision that my brother should have his will.

The letter ended by beseeching me to grant him a tryst as soon as he was able to ask for it, and was signed—until death my Rakhibandbhai. These last words gave me a feeling of infinite peace, as when land is sighted from a ship tossing on the sea. But what would happen next ?

From the room where I am sitting now, in my tower in the fortress, I walked to the Pādishāh, past Akbar's and Jahāngīr's majestic red castle and through the graceful porch that leads to my father's white Harem-courts. In here everything seems to have been made by diamond-cutters—it is so light, airy and glittering. I remembered the House of Dreams in Fathpur and sighed deeply

In one of the pretty pavilions above the river sat my father, reclining against the cushions on

his divan. His face wore the expression I had so often seen in the days of my youth—as if he, the emperor, were inaccessible to everyone. But when he caught sight of me, when I gave him a flower, plucked for him at Fathpur Sikri, his face lit up with that feeling of gratitude which he felt for even the slightest gift. And a thought passed through my brain—had he, the emperor, never been loved for his own sake? . . .

He told me that he had handed over the whole government to Prince Dārā, in order that the prince, endowed with such extensive power, might more easily save his father from losing the kingdom and being imprisoned by Prince Aurangzeb. As he spoke his withered face was warmed by a faint flush. What alarmed him most was that Sulaimān Shakōh with his seasoned troops did not come. Why did the young prince not listen to the leader of his army, Rājā Jai Sing, and speed on to Agra instead of pursuing Shāh Shujā?

I said nothing but thought the more. Rājā Jai Sing of Amber was a faithful vassal, no doubt, but could he forget that Dārā once called him a musician, because he wore a beard, and would he not avenge himself by letting Shāh Shujā escape?

I laid my forehead on my father's clasped hands, and it seemed to me that they no longer had that

curious scent of apples about them. Sorrowing I left him and walked on.

From one of the castle-turrets I could see part of the big army, which had been speedily got together, being reviewed. The horses seemed good, weapons and coats-of-arms glittered, and one body of soldiers after another came marching up. At that moment I could not but believe that victory would be ours! And the next day, towards nightfall, when the moon had risen, I was going to meet my Rakhibandbhai at the Tāj Mahāl.

Next day the message came that the allied armies were rapidly approaching. In spite of the emperor's entreaties the Crown Prince would no longer wait for the arrival of his son. Everything was ready for taking the field.

At last it was the hour of the tryst. I gave orders that some armed men should stand by the entrance-porch of the garden, and Hāzir and Koil were to keep watch in the vicinity of the mausoleum. Then I walked slowly towards the tomb along the narrow canal between the cypresses.

The sun had sunk as if in a deep well of melted copper and was sending forth a last breath of hot air over Agra—did it augur a fatal conflagration? Now a fresh breeze stirred the evening air; now the moon-lamp was lit above the earth

in its jade-green sky-globe. Never had the cypresses formed so solemn a procession, never had the Tāj loomed between them so dazzlingly white and unreal—a palace for spirits! Nowhere in the world is the air laden with such sweet perfume of rose and jasmine, and nowhere do birds sing so melodiously: here and there they were still chanting their hymn to life in the trees.

I stood quite still, enchanted; it was as if my mother, in her peerless beauty, had come nearer to me than ever before. “Why all this contention, children?” a voice whispered amid the foliage, and murmured in the brook under the leaves of the big water-plants.

Now the moon came gliding behind the golden spire of the mausoleum, shining like a pallid halo. Oh mother! Did Fate choose thee as an instrument to cause the aureole round the crown of the Chagatais to wane in Hind? For when thou—the only one—didst depart, the many came, and as stone upon stone were joined together for building the Tāj, pieces of gold, set with jewels, were let into the jasper walls of the hall of mirrors. In this manner the emperor himself laid stone upon stone for his own grave. Thou, the only one, didst give him strength; the many stole it. . . .

I heard the big porch open and shut, heard footsteps on the marble walk behind me—how

well I recognised that springy gait! —and I was recalled to the present as if by a song. This evening the Rao was dressed all in white with a saffron-coloured mantle on his arm, and as he bowed his head in greeting, I saw the whole pearl necklace that was fastened along the folds of the turban as if he meant me to see it.

We seated ourselves higher up, where the platform surrounding the small tank divides the canal into two parts. How difficult it was to concentrate my thoughts on the coming war!

Very soon I noticed that the Rao, who never obeyed the command of any other Hindu general, had his own ideas about Dārā as leader of the imperial army. And the army itself! It was whispered that thirty thousand of the Mogul cavalry were inclined to go over to the enemy, and as for the other troops—which at a review might seem able to conquer the world—of what kind of men did a great part of them consist? Bakers, butchers, barbers and the like, who had never smelt powder before and were not in the habit of facing death. But already the next morning the march to the battle-field must begin. There was no choice.

The river Chambal was the goal; there the hostile armies were to meet. All the crossings over the river were fortified, except one, in the

territory of Rāja Champat, but the rāja had given his word of honour not to let the enemy pass. "If his words are to be relied on," murmured the Rao.

No enemy, however, was worse than Khaliullah Khan! The Rao was convinced that he was full of evil devices. And the Khan had been placed in command of the thirty thousand horsemen! "If the prince can withstand his bland words now, it will be easier to confront the cannon of Aurangzeb afterwards," said the Rao with suppressed bitterness; and he besought me to warn my brother once more, before the second night-watch.

For a while we sat in silent thought. Then I burst out: "The Rajputs! All your own illustrious cavalry, Rao Rāja, and all Ram Sing's!"

At first the Rao did not answer; he looked straight before him. "Behold, there is a lamp in the Tāj Mahāl that burns for ever," he said at length. "The faithful homage of a devoted heart." Now he turned his face to me, radiant with emotion. "You know, Princess, that the lamp is always burning in the sanctuary, built in Udaipur to the honour of your royal father. With ardent hearts the men of Rājasthan will take the field under the emperor's banner!"

We walked towards the Tāj. The Rao stopped and looked at the tomb. I watched him.

“Man is the master of this world,” he said in a low voice. “The virile force builds up, pulls down, creates and annihilates its own creation. We form our thoughts and actions according to its bidding, and do not realise that behind this force is a power greater than our own—the power of woman. When she wanders in the footsteps of the god Kāma, she transforms heaven and earth!”

Had he seen the champaka wreath?

A gust of wind swept by, laden with the strong and exquisite perfume of flowers—did it come from the lotus-dome of the grave-temple? A feeling of unutterable tenderness and indomitable strength of will lifted me high above myself.

The deep, arched window-recesses in the wall of the mausoleum offer hospitable shelter to homeless love. The Rao spread his saffron-coloured mantle on the marble floor and I sat down on it: like himself I was clad in white with a golden edging to my sārī.

Now or never must I speak. Lest I should lose courage, I clasped the amulet firmly.

Then something extraordinary happened. Najābat Khan—to whom I no longer gave a single thought—suddenly revealed himself to

my inner sight, angered, with an ill-boding expression in his eyes. And before I had time to speak the Rao said with a scornful smile, following his own thoughts, "Of all the men in Prince Aurangzeb's army there is none I would be rid of sooner than—Najābat Khan!"

I leaned heavily on my arms, pressing my hands against the floor. "Why?" I whispered in anguish.

Now he too bent forward. He breathed deeply and his eyes were shut.

"Because I hate him," he answered in a hollow voice. I was struck dumb.

What could he have heard? Then I remembered that a defiant spirit had been stirred in him, when I mentioned the Khan's name in Fathpur. How much he may have heard—that I never got to know. But I would not allow this man's shadow to stand between us.

I threw my veil aside. He should see my face. And he should know that Najābat Khan was not the man I would choose for my lord.

"Do you remember the letter?" I began in a firm voice. "The letter that I always carry in my bosom. It is written there that had I been Sanyogin" I stopped short; the face of Chattar Sāl turned darkly pale against the white marble. "And the rose . . ." But

my strength failed me and I sank back against the wall.

"I remember that many, many years ago I had a dream," he answered at last, as from far away, and opened his eyes. They looked into mine with an expression I can never forget—there is no Māya when the spirit of God dwells in man.

"Yes, I once had a dream," he continued in a firm voice, squaring his broad shoulders. "I was still young then and believed in dreams. Now I have had time to learn, Jahānarā Begam—Princess of Hindustan and queen in the lofty castle of my secret kingdom—that the loveliest dreams cannot stand the fierce light of day; they live only for a while in moonlight. The war cut a scar in my temple, and life has engraved a deeper scar still on my heart. But the further the dream is removed from the precincts of reality, the more beautiful does it appear on the other side. Where there is no fear . . ."

Life had become one great enigma to me. We sat in silence: I folded my hands. Then it seemed to me that the vault of the sky suddenly rose higher than ever above our heads, and I understood that self-denial is the gate which gives access to the seventh heaven. I felt the gulf between us widen more and more externally,

while at the same time our souls were drawn nearer and nearer to each other.

“ Shall we enter the Tāj Mahāl ? ” I asked quietly.

Who can change the course of the stars ?

The Mullāhs, who sit reading at the entrance of the mausoleum, were conducted by Hāzīr to one of the adjacent red mosques. Lights were burning in the temple. It was Friday, the night when a sheet embroidered with precious pearls is always spread over my mother's cenotaph. I begged my Rakhibandbhai to utter some word, dear to him, in such a voice, that the wonderful echo of the Tāj might answer. Then my name echoed in the dome like the distant chorus of a thousand angels.

“ Thus would I be received on the other side ! ” he said.

Now my pen refuses to write. I can write of many things, but not of the words we exchanged under that domed roof. No marriage ceremony could have brought our hearts closer together.

If Dārā's army won the battle and Chattar Sāl of Būndi were still alive, he had resolved to

go on a pilgrimage to a hill-temple, whose name he mentioned, in the mountain region of the Himālāyas. He had resolved that the battle by the Chambal river should be the last in his life.

As we walked back between the cypresses towards the big entrance-porch, years seemed to have passed since we wended our way to the tomb, and it was as if we had risen to a higher degree in some secret, spiritual order.

"May I also go on pilgrimage to the holy mountain?" I asked, as we were bidding each other farewell.

"At the foot of the mountain I will wait for you, Jahānarā Begam," he answered with a strange light in his eye, "and if not there, then in the realms of the Sun!"

Those were his last words to me.

At the raining of your swords, the garden of Hind blossomed ;
White as jasmines were the bones and the blood was red as roses.

The air was cut by purpled sabres,
into solid ruby the blades were turned.

The elephants roar, the horses neigh,
Everywhere reigns Horror.

Next morning I could see from my turret that the large army was wending its way across the plain ; Dārā's majestic elephant was a mountain rising above the Rajput's forest of lances. It was a dazzling sight to behold—all these glittering coats of mail, spear-points and the trappings of shining steel on the fierce elephants.

My eyes followed one squadron after another of Būndi's cavalry : their saffron-coloured attire bore witness from afar that they would not return without victory. A cold shudder ran down my back.

But on Chattar Sāl's elephant my eye remained fixed as long as I could see it. I knew that behind it someone rode his horse, called Javadia after Goga Chohan's steed, and I knew that on the horse's forehead hung a big fire-opal. I had sent it as my last greeting to its master.

When the roll of the kettledrums and the music could no longer be heard, and the last camel had disappeared in the sun-haze, I went back to my father. It was not easy to keep him calm : he seemed to foresee all the evil that might come to pass. Trying to dispel these thoughts I began to talk about the controversies between the four sons of the emperor Bābur—Humayūn, Kāmṛān, Askarī and Hindāl—and how Mirzā Kāmṛān, like Aurangzeb, made believe that he was a dervish and tried to dethrone the emperor Humayūn, whom Bābur had appointed to be his successor, and how he failed. . . .

Out of the deep hollow of his eyes my father's glances shot restlessly, as if seeking some firm point upon which to fix—and suddenly they turned on me. Oh, how they pierced my heart ! He answered :

“ The emperor Humayūn had Kāmṛān's eyes put out, for many a Chagatai had lost his life through him ! Mirzā Askarī was good to the child Akbar, although he had forcibly snatched him away from his father. And Mirzā Hindāl gave his life for the emperor Humayūn. Has the House of Timūr ceased to care if its race comes to an end ; and will the alien peoples, whom we conquered, value that which we ourselves destroy ? ”

I could only bow my head in silence, thinking

of my own guilt, which awaited its punishment and threatened the existence of the empire. The wife of Shāyishta Khan, whom I had helped to bring to the emperor, and who now no longer desired to live. The vengeance of the Khan. . .

During the following days, it seemed to me that a star was moving on in its fixed course above our heads towards a point marked out by Fate, and that everything was attracted towards that point. . . .

My father had implored the Crown Prince to wait for his son Sulaimān Shakōh, but the young prince moved his army farther and farther away from Agra, in pursuit of Shāh Shujā, whilst our enemies drew nearer and nearer. If Sulaimān had come in time with his men we should not have needed Khalīlullah and his untrained soldiers.

Every day it grew hotter ; the great army had set out at the end of Shabān. After a few days couriers began to arrive with messages from the camp ; other news also reached us, and it was not always easy to discover what was true and what was not.

But things happened which I will now relate. For I got to know the whole truth afterwards.

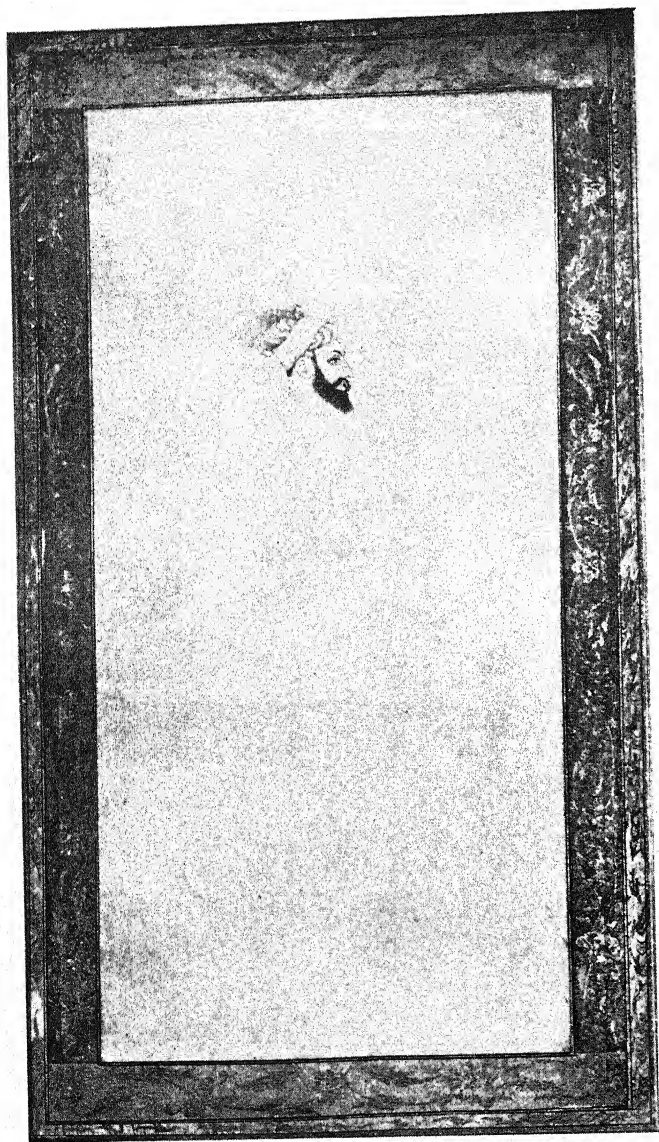
Dārā pitched his camp on the bank of the river Chambal : it is said to have looked like a city in

airy land, with its motley tents and its flags and streamers in every shade of colour.

After two days the enemy was espied afar off. Dārā's men prayed that they might be allowed to open fire. But the Crown Prince still wished to wait for Sulaimān Shakōh. Alas, he never came. . . .

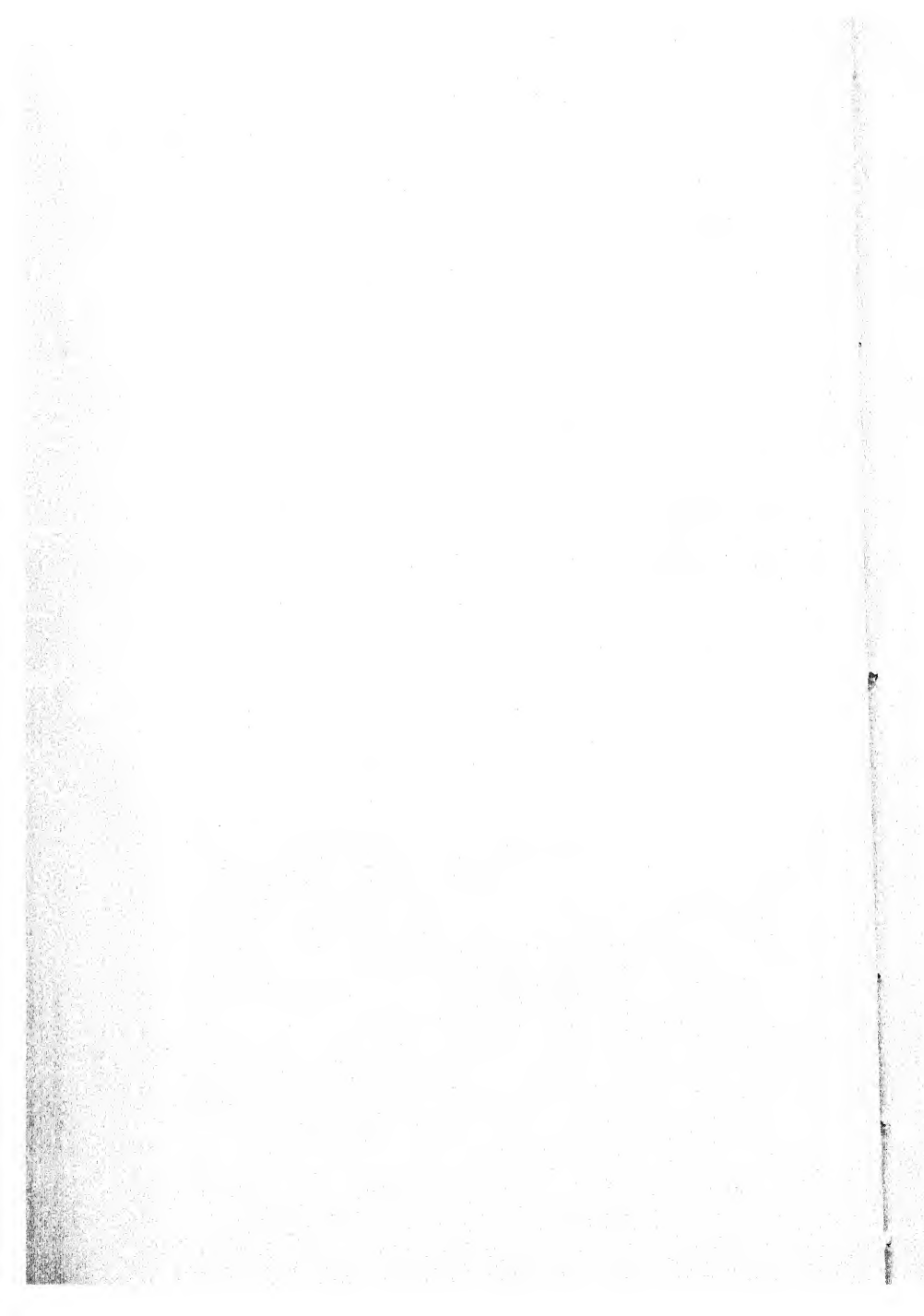
All the passages across the river were fortified except one, on the territory which belonged to Rājā Champat—who had pledged his word of honour not to let the enemy pass over. But Aurangzeb, who got to know about this passage a few *kos* from Dārā's camp, knew how to bribe Rājā Champat to break his word, and after twenty-four hours' forced march through the jungle he stood with more than eight thousand cavalry on the other side of the fortified river.

Now was the moment for Dārā to attack : Aurangzeb's men lay scattered on the river-bank, exhausted after their forced march. The greater part of his army had not yet had time to arrive. The general Ibrāhīm Khān, advises the Crown Prince to send twelve thousand horsemen immediately to surprise the enemy. But Khalīlullah whispers in the Crown Prince's ear, insinuating that if he sends these horsemen away from his army, their generals will get the honour instead of himself. He had better wait. . . .



AURANGZEB

Miniature (about 1660). Portrait



Did I not feel in Agra at that moment how the star of Fate glided on—silently, inexorably—in its appointed course.

It was in the beginning of Ramazān. Next day Dārā set out from the river to meet his brother-foes by Samaghar. But it was too late: during the night and early morning the greater part of the forces had arrived, and new troops were constantly pouring in. The heat was suffocating, and when they reached an extensive plain the lack of water caused much distress. Dārā wished the trumpets to sound the attack at once, as Aurangzeb was still waiting for some of his artillery and his men were tired out. But now the traitors resorted to astrology: the signs in the heavens were unfavourable! Better wait—once more. Compared to the invincible battalions of the crown prince, what was Prince Aurangzeb but a little dot on the globe?

Next morning Prince Dārā received a letter from the emperor, beseeching him to return to Agra and there await the arrival of Sulaimān. The answer sent was that within three days Aurangzeb and Mūrād would be dragged before the Pādishāh to submit to his verdict. . . .

On the following day which was Saturday, Prince Dārā again wished to advance. But the traitors to their sovereign invented the excuse

that this day also was unfavourable, as it was raining. The next day was Sunday, when God created the light. Better wait—for the third time.

Now the star had nearly reached its destination. . . .

On Saturday, towards midnight, Aurangzeb discharged three shots ; this was to let the traitors know that he was ready now to meet the attack ; the big guns had arrived, men and animals were rested. Dārā also answered with three shots. But not until the morning did the two armies meet.

Dārā's cannon boomed with an incessant thunder : the gunpowder smoke from all these volleys, mixed with the thick dust-clouds, darkened the air. But all this waste of powder was of no avail ; the enemy's troops were arrayed too far off to be hit by the balls.

Aurangzeb only answered with a few cannon-balls. Then three shots were heard again from his encampment. Another signal. . . .

Khalilullah offered more advice. Since the Crown Prince had already destroyed the greater part of the enemy's army by his artillery fire, the moment had now come for him to advance and complete his victory. Rustam Khan, one of Dārā's most eminent commanders said : " It

is best to let the enemy attack us. Then we will receive him as the Crown Prince's army should, with its superior forces and all the other advantages it has on its side."

But Khalilullah prevails. He whispers that the renowned general Rustam Khan lacks courage. Honour, honour, first of all! They must wait no longer. . . .

Dārā commands the artillery to unlink its chains and passes through with his cavalry to attack the enemy. But this sudden movement alarms his untrained troops: barbers, butchers, blacksmiths, turn their back to the enemy and begin fighting over the coffers of silver and gold in the baggage-train, killing one another instead of the foe. . . .

But Dārā continues his advance bravely, waving his hand that everyone may follow him. The guns are silent, the din of the drums recommences. The enemy sends a cannon-ball or two. . . .

Then suddenly, as the Crown Prince comes nearer, a storm of musket and cannon fire breaks forth. A large part of Dārā's army is scattered. Still he continues to wave his hand. Chattar Sāl and Rustam Khan come to his rescue—they force their way through Aurangzeb's artillery, and with a fury that nothing could withstand,

the prince puts the enemy's infantry and camels to flight. . . .

Aurangzeb sees the impending danger, which he had not counted upon. He sends strong reinforcements under Shekh Mir—the teacher, who had advised him not to buy pearls but to raise soldiers with his money! The battle rages, the enemies fight hand to hand; swords clash, clarions ring out, arrows hail upon the shields. With royal mien and straining every nerve Prince Dārā sits firmly on his high elephant and encourages his men to great deeds. The enemy is giving way.

In Agra the excitement had reached its climax.

Ever since the morning everyone had known that the battle was going on. Later in the day a firangi came back from the field: his horse dropped dead outside his house. This firangi had seen the plundering of Dārā's baggage-train and spread abroad rumours that the imperial army had been defeated.

Then it seemed to me that everything grew dark, and that the star had come to rest over its goal. But a little later a courier dashed up and gave an incoherent account of the facts I have related above. He had left Samaghar while the

battle was at its height, hoping to be the first to tell the emperor of Shāh Buland Ikbāl's victory.

But I no longer believed anything I heard.

My father had grown several years older during these last days. I found no words either to console or to encourage him but betook myself to the turret whence I could look far across the plain in the daytime. The heat was still very oppressive; like an evil omen the breeze at nightfall raised thick clouds of dust towards the stars.

I could not see much in the dark, but I could listen. And I heard one party of horsemen after another riding into Agra; but the sound of trotting horses died away, no one came as far as the castle. Why did no one come? . . .

It was getting late—nearly nine o'clock. Then I heard—as when the wind rises to a tempest—a body of cavalry approaching. As it came nearer I noticed how uneven was the tramp of the horses—were the animals wounded? And why no torches? But this time many of the horsemen seemed to have stopped at the castle.

Dārā had come. But no further than to the porch. Exhausted and miserable he refused to enter, fearing that he might be shut in by the pursuing enemy. Nor could he bear to meet his father or me in this state. But before he proceeded to his own palace he sent us a message.

When the messenger arrived I was sitting by my father's side. The prince had sent us both this greeting: "What you prophesied has now befallen me." And how great was his remorse for having prevented the Pādishāh from being carried out amongst his troops! We sent the emperor's most faithful eunuch to console him with all the words of loving sympathy we could find.

And now I learned how the battle had ended. When Prince Aurangzeb's troops were retreating and he himself was in great danger of being captured, he despatched his best cavalry to stop Prince Dārā's advance and kept only a small force near his own person. But Aurangzeb sat immovable on his elephant, which he had had chained to the ground to show his men that he would not stir for fear of death, but only to gain the victory. . . .

If the Crown Prince had continued to pursue the retreating enemy as before—when it seemed as if a wing from above had swept the brave army across the field—then the princes Aurangzeb and Mūrād would have been brought in fetters to Agra. But the ground was rough, and Prince Dārā was overtaken by fatigue; he made a short halt. . . .

It was one of Dārā's captains who told us this. Bowed, and soiled with blood and dust, he stood before us like an emblem of the defeat. He had

interrupted his narrative, as if he wished to prepare us for the worst. I was already prepared for anything.

When the Crown Prince halted, he continued, a message came that Rustam Khan, who had been fighting against Sultan Muhammed, had fallen, and that Rao Chhattar Sāl of Būndi had been killed by a bullet in the fight with Najābat Khan's force. . . .

I rose, meaning to say that this was not true, but sank back into my chair. When I opened my eyes again everything around me had changed. True, we sat in the same hall and Dārā's captain was still speaking, but it was all so far away from me. What did it matter—all this that had happened? Had we not all passed over to the land of the dead? . . .

My father had asked some questions. Now I heard the messenger answer: "If Khalīlullah Khan had made haste to come to the Crown Prince's rescue, when the prince, after receiving the tidings of these deaths, had driven back Najābat Khan's and Sultan Muhammed's troops, this day would have ended otherwise!"

No, we were not all dead! Vengeance called for renewed life!

I began listening again: after Ram Sing, too, had fallen with honour amongst his Rajputs, Prince Dārā dashed on with glowing ardour to

lead the Hindus against Mūrād Bāksh. But now a fatal and extraordinary thing happened—Dārā dismounted from his elephant. Wild confusion arose in his army : leaders and soldiers imagined that he was dead, and instead of charging on to victory at full speed, the troops turned and fled like clouds in a whirlwind.

The man who now stood before the emperor would rather have lain among the dead on the battlefield than bring him these tidings. He had had time to see Khalilullah set out towards the enemy's camp with five thousand men, but not to fight ! Prince Aurangzeb had remained on his elephant, as if the spot where it stood was the only one on earth from which victory could be obtained.

Now I would listen no longer ; I left my father and came back here to my tower. A cruel claw seemed to clutch my heart so tightly that I could hardly breathe.

I had just sunk down by the door to the colonnade opening on the river, when Koil appeared. Her voice choked with tears, she asked me to allow her to admit a horseman from Būndi's cavalry, who had implored her to lead him to Begam Sāhib. To no one else would he deliver his message. And Koil had seen him amongst the Rao's men at Fathpur.

I had all the lamps lighted, and something almost like joy warmed my heart.

The horseman limped ; he breathed heavily and bled from many wounds. He threw himself down on his knees, and I dressed his wounds as if they had been his master's. Then I saw that he clasped in his hands a pearl necklace, more red than white. . . .

At last he was able to speak, but how can I repeat what he said ? He spoke as if raving in delirium. But I was able to make out this much. . . .

When thousands of terror-stricken soldiers in the Crown Prince's army took to flight under the enemy's first violent artillery-fire, the Hara prince had attacked Najābat Khan's cavalry with his best troops and had fought his way to Prince Mūrād. Then he turned round to his followers, and cried so that his voice was heard far and wide : " Cursed be he who flees ! Faithful to my Svayamdharma I am chained to this field and will not quit it alive without victory ! " He raised his men's courage to the highest pitch and rode on with utter contempt for death.

A cannon-ball hit his elephant, which turned and fled. Chattar Sāl threw himself off the back of the animal, and calling for his horse exclaimed : " My elephant may turn his back on the enemy,

but his master—never!” He had disposed his men in close formation and was aiming his spear at Prince Mūrād, when a bullet pierced his forehead.

I sat silent and without stirring, fearing to miss a single word, and that loss of blood might prevent the man from continuing his story. His eyes shone like fire in his emaciated face. I learned that the Rao’s youngest son took up the fierce attack after his father’s fall and followed him in death. In this wise twelve princes of the blood had fallen for the emperor at Ujjain and Dholpur. . . .

Now Prince Aurangzeb could advance towards the Crown Prince’s deserted tent across a saffron-coloured carpet. Saffron, saffron everywhere.

. . .

The man took the pearl necklace and wiped off the blood with an edge of his yellow turban.

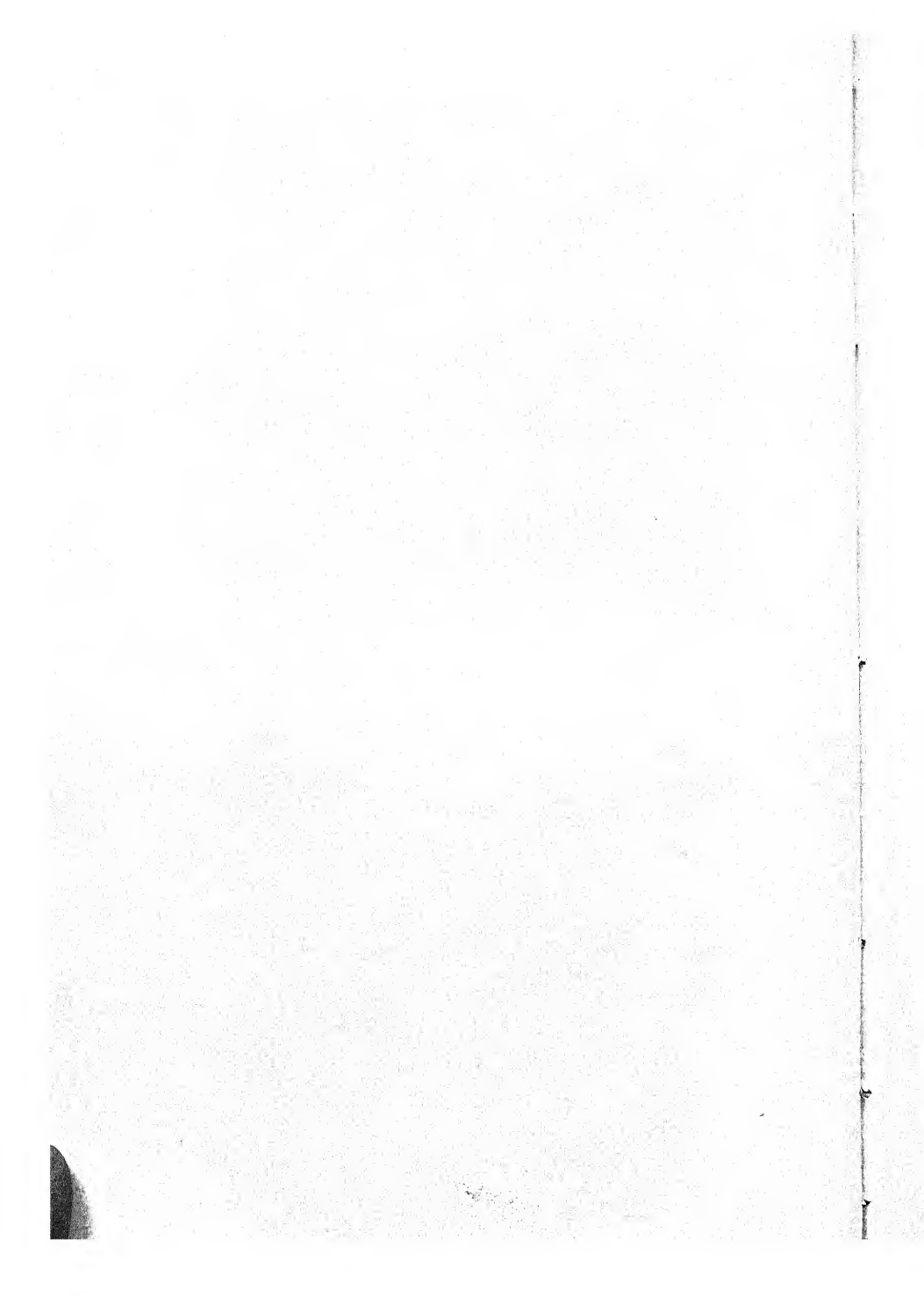
“I lay as dead on the battlefield after having been hit by the butt-end of a musket,” he went on. “When I came to, the enemy had left us and I crept up to my lord, whom no one had yet found. Now his blessed body has been taken to Dholpur to be burned by the river. . . .”

“I saw the pearl necklace and I thought”—now he spoke very low—“that perchance the emperor’s daughter would keep it in memory



DĀRĀ SHAKŌH

Miniature (about 1650). Portrait



of her royal father's best and most faithful vassal ! ”

I stretched out both hands to receive the sacred gift, and under my veil I hid it in my bosom.

“Who shot the bullet which killed your master ? ”

The soldier's eyes shone brighter. He crept along the floor to me, looking about to see if anyone else were in the room, and whispered :

“Probably no one will ever know for certain ! Many will say that the bullet came from Prince Mūrād. I was not far off when it whistled by and I believe it came from—Najābat Khan.”

He crept a little nearer still. “Tomorrow perhaps I shall be no more, Pādshāh Begam,” he said. “Therefore I will give you some words to keep before I go.” Now he whispered again. . . . “Many years ago when I was campaigning with my lord in Prince Aurangzeb's army, he sent me one day with a message to the Prince's tent. The sentinel asked me to wait outside and when I was let in, the high personages did not notice that I was there. Prince Aurangzeb and Najābat Khan were conversing. I know not what he meant but the Khan said : ‘The tree which the emperor had no mind to replant in one of the gardens belonging to the royal house of Balkh, shall not be torn up by the root

to be stuck down behind a heathen temple in Būndi ! ' And Prince Aurangzeb answered : ' To do such a deed a heretic must sit on the throne. Which Allāh forbid ! ' I told my lord all this. And afterwards I noticed that when the Mahārāja met the Khan, they did not salute each other. "

Now Chattar Sāl was as near to me as on that evening in the Tāj Mahāl. And I felt that he would never leave me.

I asked the soldier from Būndi to stop in the fortress and promised to have his wounds attended to. He only answered : " Now I follow my lord " ; and with a blessing on his lips he dragged himself to the door. There he turned round. " I prophesy, " he said, gazing heavenward with his fever-glowing eyes, " that this is the last time the people of Rājasthan assemble in a great host to fight under the banner of a Mogul emperor ! "

No sooner had the soldier departed than Koil came back to announce that : " The wife of Khalilullah Khan sits outside in her palanquin. "

Fate knows how to choose her scourges. How much had not this woman cost the empire by her mere existence ?

I received her. She moaned and wept. Her husband was about to return from the conqueror's tent, and meanwhile she wished to let

the Pādishāh and Pādshāh Begam know that she mourned over the defeat as we did. She whispered that it was probably the Khan who had enticed the Crown Prince to descend from his elephant, so that confusion in his army might ensue—that it was her husband who had cheated him by suggesting to him that it would be easier to reach and capture Prince Aurangzeb on horseback, at the head of his own and the Khan's cavalry. And Prince Dārā had hardly had time to follow his advice before the Khan slipped away to pass over to the enemy. . . .

At last I was left alone and went out on to the verandah facing the river ; there I leaned against a pillar, as if it were my last support in life. The claw still clutched my heart, but here I could breathe more freely.

My blood throbbed with grief, hatred and longing for revenge ; the load of pain was too heavy to bear. . . .

Then I suddenly experienced something akin to a miracle ; my earthly form seemed to be transmuted, as if it had no weight, and I felt myself to be more in contact with the elements—with air, water and fire—than with creatures of flesh and blood. The river flowed on and on down below and its murmur stole soothingly into my ear—stole through every fibre. The

murmur turned into the melody I had heard from the orchestra in Delhi, when one spoke and many wept ; and the river swept me on with it, farther and farther away from the shores of this life. But along its course it cleansed all sin and shame on earth. To my inner eye all became light, I was no longer here—I was finishing my champaka wreath in a land very far off, and holding Svayamvara amongst the princes in the kingdom of heaven.

I wished to tell my own story to myself, and now the story is ended. But my sorrow will never end—and yet I go on writing.

I have noted down everything—sometimes at long intervals—as if compelled to do so. As if I were telling the story to someone else besides myself, and as if oblivion, to whom I meant to dedicate the story, might, after all, become Memory. . . .

On the night following the day of battle at Samaghar, Koil had found me lying on the verandah-floor with one arm round the pillar, fast asleep. She would not wake me but had tucked a warm coverlet round me and let me lie there.

In the morning I awoke with the same feeling that my whole being had been transformed,

which I had experienced so strangely in the third night-watch, and which afterwards bore me through all that I had still to endure.

Today it seemed to me that we Chagatais in Hind were ghosts, left on earth to execute revenge. Had not the fākir said that Aurangzeb was the chosen instrument to destroy the house of Timūr ?

And this is what happened after the battle.

✓ When Dārā's troops had taken flight, Khālī-lullah Khan rode off to Aurangzeb—over mounds of fallen men and animals—and he was received with the roll of drums beating a tattoo of victory. The soldiers of the Khan and Prince Mūrād formed up round Prince Aurangzeb, who rendered homage to Mūrād as the victor, and spoke to him as if he had been his king. Afterwards the princes passed on to Dārā Shakōh's deserted tent, where Aurangzeb left Mūrād with every token of subjection, telling him that this day was the first of his reign.

And Mūrād believed everything. Had not the pious Aurangzeb sworn his oath on the Korān ? Sworn to place him on the throne !

But every sensible man knew that Aurangzeb, when the right moment came, would exchange the fākir's cowl for the imperial khilat. Moreover he worked day and night to attain his final aim.

In this he received excellent help from Shāy-ishta Khan, who hated the emperor and was the mightiest man among the amirs. Aurangzeb and the Khan wrote letters to viceroys and governors all over the empire, urging them—with specious promises and disguised threats—to withstand and pursue the Crown Prince, who had fled to Delhi after the battle. Letters were written, also, to the leaders of Sulaimān Shakōh's army, who were told to deliver Prince Sulaimān to Aurangzeb.

A few days after the battle the traitors to their sovereign—my brothers—arrived with their armies at a big garden not far from Agra. From there Prince Aurangzeb sent messages to the Pādishāh. He simulated the submissive son, who had exerted himself with the sole wish to save his father from Dārā Shakōh's intrigues. The emperor answered in the same tone, also with the intention to delude. For whence could we expect rescue from the terrible position into which we had been forced? By using all the power that lay in his smooth tongue, Aurangzeb had got nearly all the generals and dignitaries to go over to him, and how could the mass of the people help us without leaders? We thought and thought. . . .

Then my father sent a message to Aurangzeb, asking him to pay him a visit, for—such was the

wording—he longed much to see him and to speak to him.

Who could know what the emperor intended to do afterwards? Perhaps Aurangzeb knew—perhaps he seemed to see the emperor's body-guard of strong-armed Tartar women—for he did not come. But every day he spread rumours abroad that he meant to come. And all the while he was preparing for something very different.

Then one day he suddenly camped with his whole army opposite us at the Tāj Mahāl. Thither went all the traitors in the town—headed by Amīn Khan—their lips brimming over with felicitations and their hands full of precious gifts.

With only one faithful Khan at his side, my father inspected the fortress himself and gave orders to open fire, for Aurangzeb's soldiers were beginning to advance. Meanwhile the prince tranquilly took possession of the whole city, occupied Dārā Shakōh's empty house, and bribed our artillerists to desert—communicating with them by means of an arrow which came flying into the fortress with a letter. . . . One soldier after another was let down by ropes from the walls, and the rest of the garrison prepared to follow.

We were cut off in the fortress and Aurangzeb's men under the command of his son Sultan Muhammed prevented all provisions from reaching us. Weakened by hunger and thirst the guards were no longer able to remain at their posts. Thus the emperor was at last compelled to surrender and let Sultan Muhammed have the keys of all the gates of the castle. I can still see the eunuch hurrying down the stairs to the Delhi gate with the heavy bunch of keys in both hands, still hear the ring of the big keys clanking against each other—like the sound of a bell afar off, summoning souls to judgment. . . .

Again my father sent word to Aurangzeb asking him to come. He answered by locking the emperor into his harem. To my sister Roshanārā and myself came letters granting us permission to quit our father's prison and go to Aurangzeb's Zenāna. My answer was that I had rather die at my emperor's feet than share the glory of the usurper on our father's throne. But my sister was carried out of the castle with much pomp. Now the time had come for her to triumph, thinking of the day she compelled Dārā to release Shāyishta and Amīn Khan!

Great as his power was already, Aurangzeb wished to establish it still more firmly, and in order to secure the allegiance of the noblemen,

he made some courtier read aloud forged letters to and from the Pādishāh at court. This ruse succeeded, for he never forgot to pretend that all his exertions had but one aim—to liberate his father from the infidel Dārā.

That which would once have inspired horror and amazement, now seemed only to be the hand of Fate. Had I not always known that Aurangzeb was like the panther lying in wait for its prey? And now the panther had made its spring. The star had stopped over its goal. What once had been was no more; peace reigned among the ruins.

“The crown has fallen from our head, woe unto us that we sinned thus,” says the prophet of the tribe of Judah. “Take us unto thee, Lord, that we may return; renew our days that they may become as heretofore!”

Could our days ever become as heretofore? My soul was far away, but if any fire could still burn in my heart for anything on earth, it glowed for my aged father and for my brother Dārā. For their sakes I would live. But I remembered Korumdevi: did she not welcome the flames of the pyre as balm for the scorching pain in her heart? . . .

✓When everything was as he wished it to be in Agra, and Shāyishta Khan had been appointed

governor of the city, Aurangzeb took what he wanted out of the royal treasury and set out with Mūrād for Delhi, meaning to advance against Prince Dārā, who had collected a new army in Lahore.

But on his way thither he had something to do. Had not Prince Mūrād to be crowned ?

Many a voice had whispered in the ear of this prince, that he ought to let Aurangzeb proceed alone, whilst he himself surrounded Agra and Delhi with his big army ; but Mūrād, who always boasted of his invincible courage, would not let himself be thus alarmed. And—had he not his brother's oath on the Korān ?

Near Mathurā the armies halted. Happy were Mūrād's days on his march. Trays laden with the costliest fruits, the most exquisite flowers, were continually brought to him, and he heard continually that no one in Aurangzeb's camp spoke of aught but the coronation. The elephants and horses were being given new trappings, gorgeous tents were to be put up, new festal robes and new ornaments were going to be made. In the kitchens there was a great stir : sweet-meats were being prepared, perfumes distilled. And dancers and musicians were practising day and night in their tents.

But in Mūrād Bakhsh's camp there was only revelry and carousing.

Mūrād had no better friend than his eunuch Shāhbāz. I know that he did everything to open his master's eyes. But in vain.

The place Aurangzeb had chosen for the ceremony was near a river with beautiful surroundings.

At length the coronation day arrived—chosen by the astrologers. Prince Mūrād went on horseback to Aurangzeb's tent. Ibrahīm Khan, who had given Prince Dārā such good advice at Samaghar, took the prince's horse by the rein, and gently turned its head, hoping that Mūrād would understand. But the prince went on. "Your Majesty's way leads to prison," said the Khan. Shāhbāz besought him in Allāh's name to turn, and others whispered the same warning in his ear, as far as the door of the tent. Nevertheless Mūrād entered.

Shekh Mir, Amīn Khan and others, all enrolled among Aurangzeb's faithful followers, received him in gala dress, their faces beaming with smiles. Aurangzeb embraced him, spoke of his brotherly love, and led him to a throne.

The music struck up, the dancing-girls came gliding in: flowers were strewn about, rose-water sprinkled everywhere, incense burnt—the atmosphere became heavy with an intoxicating odour.

The officers in Mūrād Bakhsh's army were invited to be the guests of Aurangzeb's generals, the soldiers dispersed in all directions to enjoy themselves.

The banquet began : dainty dishes and precious wines. In Aurangzeb's tent the august guest's goblet was never left empty. After a couple of hours Aurangzeb advised his brother to retire to rest, while he himself saw to the preparations for the coronation ceremony. And he promised to wake him in good time.

Followed by the faithful Shāhbāz only, Prince Mūrād went into another room. There he found a lovely woman — but the eunuch drove her away.

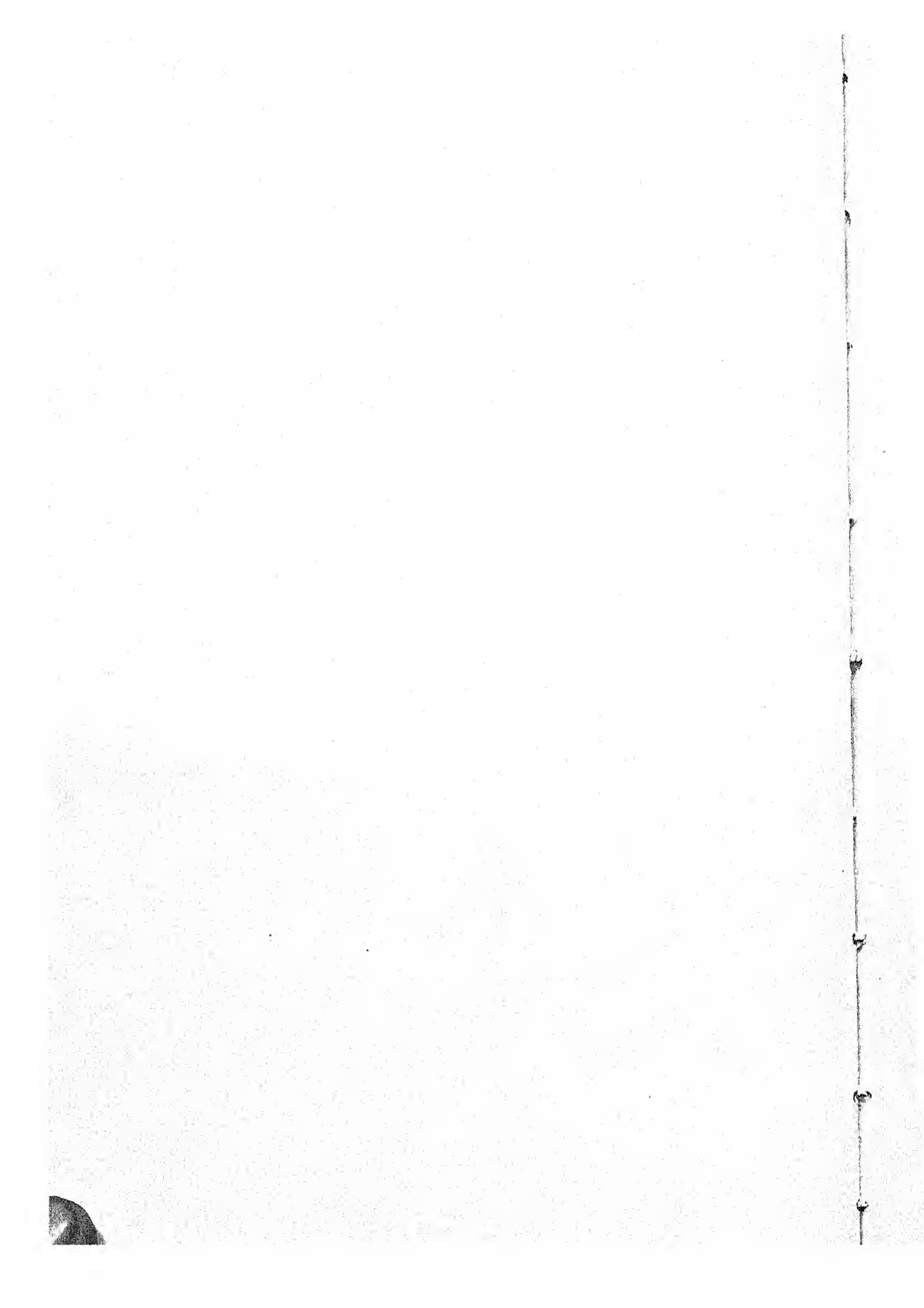
After so much wine the prince soon fell asleep.

All this and what happened next, was related to me by one I trust. When I had heard it I was crushed with woe, and remained awake the whole night, praying.

Shāhbāz sat at Mūrād's feet, rubbing them softly. Suddenly Aurangzeb appeared in the open door, clad in a white shirt and white trousers, with a simple cap instead of the coronation turban. With head bent, smiling, and on tip-toe he approached, stroking his beard ; then he suddenly raised his head and signed to the eunuch to come. Shāhbāz obeyed. Outside the door



STONE-SCULPTURE FROM THE TEMPLE OF THE SUN, KONĀRAK
(13th Century)



the eunuch was instantly seized by four men who strangled him and buried him on the spot.

Now Aurangzeb's ceremony would soon be done! He called his little son Azīm, then four years old, showed him a sparkling gem and promised to give this to the child if he could take the sword from his sleeping uncle—gently, without waking him! If he awoke, however, he would only see an innocent child!

Little Azīm was delighted and fetched the sword forthwith. Another gem was shown to the boy—would he take the uncle's dagger too? He did. And Aurangzeb could now breathe freely.

Prince Mūrād awoke to feel heavy chains being fastened to his feet. He stretched out his hand for his weapons, saw that they had been taken away—and understood at last. He made no resistance, but bowed his head and said quietly: "So this is the promise made to me with an oath on the Korān!"

The music struck up anew: all Mūrād's men thought that the ceremony was still going on. But towards eventide one elephant left for Agra and another for Delhi; both under escort. In the howdah on the elephant bound for Delhi sat the unfortunate Prince Mūrād.

As time passed his officers began to get anxious.

But Aurangzeb's generals, who had been commanded not to let them out of their tents, knew how to keep them there.

Suddenly Aurangzeb's soldiers raised a great shout in the night : " Long live King Aurangzeb ! " And it was proclaimed that everyone who had been in Shāhjahān's or Prince Mūrād's pay should receive double pay from the new sovereign.

Mūrād's officers tried to steal away, and great was the consternation among his soldiers—but at the break of day they all joined Aurangzeb's colours.

Beneath the fākir's cowl ran the blood of Chengiz, who struck the world with awe. When it was hot with the desire for power, that blood effaced all the letters in the Korān.

Mūrād Bakhsh was led through the streets of Delhi in ignominy : behind him on the elephant sat an executioner to cut his head off at the least attempt to escape. In this manner he was taken to prison, where he was given poppy-water to drink.

So Prince Aurangzeb ascended the throne. ✱

As I begin to relate what happened to my brother Dārā, I lay my cheek on the paper— that my tears may mingle with the writing.

With that strength of will which animated him at times, Dārā had already got together an army of more than thirty thousand men in Lahore.

He had great hopes of a rāja, the ruler of an adjacent state, who came to him in Lahore and promised to send auxiliary troops. None of my brothers could win men's hearts as Dārā could, when his eye smiled and his speech was like a song—and he wished to win this man. Every token of favour was showered upon the rāja and a large sum of money was given to him. But Aurangzeb's letters penetrated every corner of the empire ; the rāja forsook Dārā and kept the money. . . .

Now Aurangzeb drew nearer at the head of his army.

He knew that there were distinguished generals on Dārā's side and that many of them were attached to the Crown Prince by bonds of warm affection. The chief of these was the great Dāūd Khan. Aurangzeb took care that forged letters—purporting to be exchanged between himself and the Khan,—should repeatedly fall into Dārā's hands. Torn by the demon of suspicion after all his adversity, the poor prince became a prey to ineradicable mistrust of his most faithful officer, and wrote asking him to leave himself and his army. Then Dāūd Khan wept like a child. " Fate," said he, " seems to be spurring Dārā on to his death," and he went his way.

In all haste Dārā broke up from Lahore and marched from one place to another. In the fortress of Bhakkar he left many of his best men, and a great part of the army had already deserted. At last he crossed into Gujarat to enlist more soldiers.

Meanwhile Aurangzeb had heard that Shāh Shujā had set out from Bengal and was approaching Agra with a great host ; thereupon he left off pursuing Dārā and returned south with his whole army by forced marches. So eager was he to reach his goal in time and get his men to follow, that he sometimes galloped in advance on his horse, at such a pace that he would suddenly find himself alone. Then he would rest under a tree, leaning his head against his shield, till some of his men caught him up. . . .

One day as he was riding through a wood with only five companions, he met Rāja Jai Sing with three thousand men. Jai Sing, who came from Sulaimān Shakōh, hated Dārā,—because he had once called him “musician,”—but was attached to the Emperor Shāhjahān. His soldiers urged him to kill Aurangzeb on the spot and release the old emperor. The world would ring with his praises.

Aurangzeb understood the danger. He went to meet Jai Sing alone, as if he had expected him ;

flattered the rāja with guile equal to that of Timūr himself ; and, taking a costly pearl necklace from his own neck put it around the rāja's, saying : " I appoint you governor of Delhi. . . . It is important for the empire that you hasten thither ! "

Does Fate choose princely instruments—good or bad—to prepare the way ? And whither does the way lead ?

Rāja Jai Sing rode on without stopping.

The heat in Agra was suffocating : often as I lay awake in the night, it seemed to me that the ceiling above my golden bed was the lid of my coffin. My father and I were like shipwrecked mariners on a desolate island in the sea, and all the tidings that reached us from without seemed like remnants of a big navy shattered by a hurricane. But hatred of Aurangzeb gave my father new strength to live.

At Kajwa, near Fathpur, the new emperor and Shāh Shujā met. The battle raged fiercely : the arrows rained upon Aurangzeb's elephant and he was as near death as on that day at Samaghar. But even as then there was a traitor in the army of the victorious enemy. Mir Jumla, Aurangzeb's faithful follower, who knew this, called out to his lord : " Stay on ! stay on ! " just at the moment when he was about to dismount from his elephant.

Aurangzeb stayed on. Samaghar had taught him the way to the throne. How well this man knew how to anchor his faith !

The traitor in Shāh Shujā's army coaxed the prince to get down from his elephant, although he had heard what happened to Dārā ! The result was great confusion in his ranks and the whole army took to flight. Thus did Shāh Shujā also lose the battle against Aurangzeb, just at the moment when victory seemed certain.

My pen wearies of writing about all these struggles that threatened to shake to its very foundation the kingdom, which the emperor Shāhjahān had successfully kept together under his sceptre. "The throne or the grave !" Such was the war-cry chosen by the sons who took the field against a father who—always and in spite of all—had believed in them. Prince Shāh Shujā did not even find a grave. A couple of years later he was driven into the jungle by a king in Burma, whither he had fled for refuge, and was stabbed by the king's men. His dead body became the prey of wild beasts. Such was the end of the light-hearted brother who had been the first to break the peace.

After Shāh Shujā's defeat by Kajwa, it was Dārā's turn again. My narrative in now approaching the date at which I started.

It was in Jamāda'l Awwal A.H. 1069. Dārā set out from Gujarat with his newly enlisted army to unite his forces with those of Jaswant Sing on their way to Agra, as had been agreed between the two princes. Without the rāja's help the Crown Prince had no chance of resisting Aurangzeb or winning the throne. But Jaswant Sing, who had fought so loyally for our father's cause before, failed ; whom did not Aurangzeb catch in his net ?

The prince had now no choice but to encamp on some low hills, not far from Ajmīr, and to dig trenches for his defence. When Aurangzeb came, he saw that it would be difficult to attack. But he was not long in finding a resource, for he got Dilēr Khan—one of the most eminent of the men he had lured over to his side—to write to Prince Dārā. The letter said that the Khan intended to desert to the Crown Prince in the heat of the battle with all his men, and that he pledged his word with an oath on the Korān not to fail. My poor brother! Traitors stole their way into his confidence by the very way which he barred to his best friends! Now he forbade his soldiers to attack Dilēr Khan's troops when the fight took place. . . .

The day before the battle Aurangzeb's greatest astrologer whispered in his ear that the constellations of the following day foreboded disaster

to the commander of the imperial troops. When Aurangzeb's generals heard this at a secret conclave, Shekh Mir asked to be granted the honour of sacrificing his life for his emperor by taking his place on the royal elephant. In the early morning watch, when the army marched out to battle, he sat on Aurangzeb's elephant, dressed like his lord ; but in the dim morning light the soldiers felt sure that their leader himself was at their head. A bloody battle ensued ; Dārā's artillery decimated the enemy's ranks and Shekh Mir was shot dead, but the man who sat behind him held up the corpse and moved its arms, at the same time urging on the elephant. Aurangzeb's men, believing that their leader was still alive, were animated to do their utmost.

Thus he did not leave his elephant this time either. . . .

Now the moment had come for Dilēr Khan. He gave the signal to Dārā to open his ranks and let him pass through. Then he charged with his twelve thousand men, but instead of joining forces with the prince he slaughtered the opposing troops right and left. Dārā's whole army was put to flight.

And so the prince was defeated again.

When the web of man's fate has been woven in black,
The waters of Zamzam and Kausar cannot wash it white.

The darkness gathered still closer round my poor brother. The city in Gujarat, whence he had started, shut its gates against him when hot and dusty he fled back to it after the defeat, as if to his own home. The closed gates shut out all hope. From the women's camp piercing cries ascended, seeking to compel the Lord of the Heavens to show them charity !

How God humiliates the souls he would draw to himself ! Even old friends forsook the Crown Prince, and the greater part of his soldiers, who had come back to him after the defeat, now deserted. To those who were left—even to the meanest—he spoke like one abandoned by the world.

Pursued by Aurangzeb's men Dārā fled northward again, making for Persia. He had taken with him his three wives, his daughter Jāni Begam and his little son Sepehr Shākōh. A couple of thousand men still followed him.

Oh, why did he not speed on, *kos* after *kos* without stopping ! But now Fate had placed her last outpost in his way, to lure him into the abyss.

Not far from the Persian frontier lay the small territory of Jūn, ruled by an Afghan chief, whom Prince Dārā had thrice saved from capital punishment in bygone years. Dārā now wished to visit this khan, hoping that he would give his former benefactor a helping hand. Instead of

doing this, the khan imprisoned the prince and his family, separating them from the soldiers.

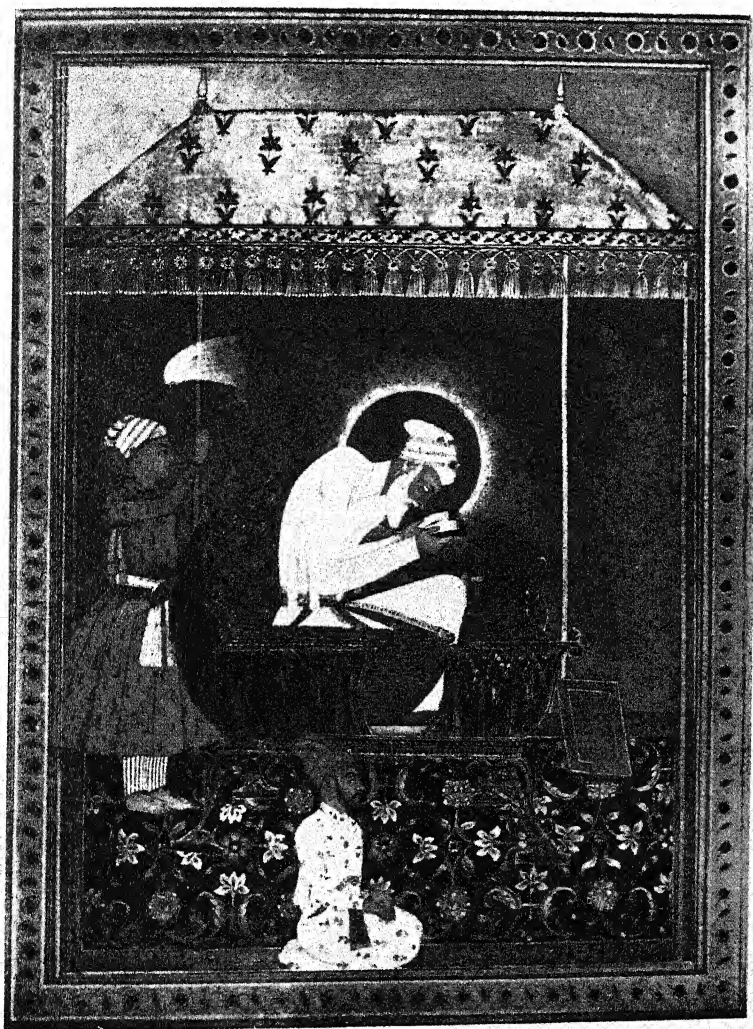
Dārā's eunuch now made up his mind to save his lord by killing the khan of Jūn. In this he almost succeeded, but the pistol ball intended for the traitor whistled past—and now all Dārā's men were taken prisoners.

It was rumoured that the soldiers Aurangzeb had sent in pursuit of the prince were not far off.

Then Nādīra Begam, Dārā's principal wife, trembled with fear and abandoned herself to despair. She loved her lord and did not wish to survive him. She seemed to see clearly what her destiny would be in the future—as the emperor Aurangzeb's concubine! “The man of violence calls for my husband's and my sons' blood to quench his thirst for blood! My death will be a trophy for the tyrant's triumphal procession!” With such frenzied words she sucked poison from the ring in which she had kept it, and fell down dead.

Never before had Fate given Dārā so bitter a cup to drink. Nādīra Begam was a diadem among women.

While lamentation and wailing were still loud in the house of death, shouts and the clash of arms were heard outside. Aurangzeb's men stood at the door. “Seize the prisoner!” the cry



AURANGZEB

Mogul Miniature

echoed through the castle in Jūn. And before Dārā had time to draw his sword that he might die in the struggle and fall near his wife, he was overpowered. His hands and feet were shackled. Four elephants were led up to the door to carry off the prince, his two other wives, his children and his slave girls ; but no one knew in which howdah the prince sat alone. On each elephant sat executioners with spears and naked swords.

The procession moved on towards the fortress of Bhakkar, where Dārā's garrison had held out bravely against assault and bribery. They would not yield to the command of any man but Dārā. So great was the fidelity of these men that the captive prince had to write and exhort them to open the gates to the enemy in order to save their lives.

After forty days the prisoners arrived in Delhi. The whole way the captives had been accompanied by a large mounted escort ; and here several troops of cavalry, clad in shining mail, reinforced this escort, riding beside and behind the prince.

And now I have reached the date when my narrative began.

In an open howdah sat Prince Buland Ikbāl, and in this ignominious plight the prince—once so famous and powerful—was conveyed through

the streets of Delhi under the pitying gaze of the people. A fākir shouted to him : " Oh Dārā ! When you were master you always gave me alms ! Today I know you have nothing to give ! " Then the prince threw the fākir a dirty shawl he had been given as a cloak—for he could not refrain from the pleasure of bestowing his last gift in this life !

Sentence was pronounced on Prince Dārā. He was to lose his head as an idolater and enemy of Islām.

Aurangzeb's faith had frightened him. Before the headsman came, he could be heard crying out in his prison : " Muhammed kills me ; the Son of God gives me life ! "

The ways of God are as many as the souls of men. In many ways Dārā had sought his God ; had he found Him now ? And was it revealed to him in the agony of death that there are eternal laws which none of us can escape, that there is a bond between the Creator and the created which no language can express ? . . .

God be gracious unto thee, my brother, throughout eternity ! ✱

Dārā was dead. But his two wives and his sons were still alive.

And Aurangzeb sent word to Udaipūri, the Georgian, to enter his presence. She obeyed—and he espoused her. But Ranādil, the dancing-girl of low birth, sent answer that she would fain know why the emperor wished to see her. The emperor wished to marry her, was the reply. Thereupon Ranādil rejoined that she would like to know what there was about her that pleased the emperor. Her beautiful hair, was the answer. Then she cut off her hair and sent it to Aurangzeb saying that here was the thing of beauty he desired; for her own part she wished to live in peace. Again the answer came that the emperor intended to marry her, for her beauty was great. He would consider her as one of his consorts; let her think of him as being Prince Dārā himself. . . .

Then she took a knife, slashed her handsome face, collected the blood in a cloth and sent the cloth to Aurangzeb, saying that if her beauty was what he desired it was gone now, and if he coveted her blood, she was willing to let him shed it.

After that Aurangzeb yielded to her steadfastness and showed her consideration. She mourned for a short time, and then followed her lord beyond the grave, for she was a daughter of Hind.

The lovely Jāni Begam, Dārā's daughter, was sent to my sister Roshanārā, who had given a

splendid feast after Dārā's execution. She treated the orphan cruelly; Jāni pined away. Then came a happy day for me, for the emperor Aurangzeb sent her to us in the fortress of Agra! On that day the plashing fountains whispered of bygone joys in the Anguri Bāgh, and the birds remembered long-forgotten melodies. . . .

As long as any male descendant of the first or second generation of the old imperial house was alive Aurangzeb knew no peace. Within a couple of years they were all captured and murdered behind the walls of the Gwalior fortress, where also Aurangzeb's own son Sultan Muhammad, was imprisoned and given poppy-water to drink. The Korān commands that no one shall be condemned to death without cause. It was proclaimed that Prince Mūrād had once had an innocent man killed; an accuser was fetched, and Mūrād was beheaded as a murderer.

After many sufferings in the mountain regions, to which he had fled, Prince Sulaimān Shakōh was betrayed and brought before Aurangzeb. When this high-souled young knight, with his noble features, stood before the slayer of his father, a subdued murmur rose from the assembly, and behind the lattice-work of the zenāna windows many a tear was shed. Was he not of the same blood as the emperor and could he not therefore

be spared the humiliation of the poppy-water before his life was taken ? The strong man wept as he begged for this boon. Aurangzeb smiled graciously—but that very evening a goblet containing the poisonous potion was given to Sulaimān Shakōh in the fortress of Gwalior ; and a month later his life was taken.

When the heat hung its heavy pall over Agra, how often have I longed for Kashmir, where the deodar stands on its rock like a minaret of the forest, where the Dhāk flowers glow like fire-opals—whole fields of them, saffron-hued, never trodden by any blood-stained foot—where I could wander in a garden leading from the shore of a lake, terrace on terrace, past violet-courts and rose-courts and cupolas of leafy, spreading trees, towards mountains which rise against the sky like high portals shutting in a Great Secret. And a breeze, as from a white land of snow far away, lifts thought over the mountains and on towards felicity ineffable. . . .

And in the night when I cannot sleep, how often do I not wander in waking dreams to Fathpur Sikri—more abandoned than ever—where so many a spot shines in my memory with unfading glory ! Akbar's city will never flourish again under the

sway of one of our tribe—Śiva, the destroyer, does not prosper on Vishnu's pillar ; but perhaps a day will dawn, when some monarch of Hind's own people will ascend that throne—a prince who will know when to lay down his arms at the temple-door, a prince who has seen the One. . . .

IV

The sentences which follow, till we come to the next part, are gleanings—detached sentences which I found amongst some papers that were rolled up and lying apart from the connected manuscript. They seem to have been collected during a period with at least *one* long interval.

Did the Princess intend at first to destroy these papers, and then, changing her mind, leave them lying there after all ?

Had I still strength to hate, my hatred would not be allayed until his life had been taken, as he took the lives of all the others—aye, as he tried to take the life of his own father !

When the Emperor Jahāngīr came to Nasiruddin Khilji's grave he kicked it and commanded that all that was left of the patricide's corpse—which had lain there for a hundred years—should be dug up and thrown into the river.

Woe unto the man whose lot it is to nourish the passion for revenge !

Oh, Lord ! Lord ! Help me to forgive !

All go. When the banquet is over the lights are put out. All go. And alone I slip out into the universe to all those who went away.

Outside me a void, within me a blank. What is everything but emptiness? I remember how my brothers used to play with little soldiers of coloured tin: a tiny india-rubber ball upset nearly all of them, but some remained standing. Some fell, some remained standing. What matter? It was all only a game.

What is the difference between those of us who are fallen and those who still stand? Is it not all a game in God's hand?

My life is like a broken diadem. But all its parts are whole.

Happiness is short as the gleam of the evening sun on the wall.

Every mosque is a prison, and so is every palace. Only he who walks in God's ways can conquer the world.

My soul is like a leaf lashed by storm and rain until only the fibres are left. And now the blue of the heavens above can shine through it.

The Emperor Alamgīr has five sons. How he will come to fear them all! Sultan Muhammed is already imprisoned for life. . . .

He who had the wisdom to remain on his elephant, who offered up his prayers between two armies—how he bends his royal back now like a slave, fearing retribution !

One day I woke with Tan Sen's Song to Mira Bhai in my ear, and Koil came with a handful of tuberoses from Anguri Bāgh. It was a day of bliss.

For Hāzir had got to know that the Emp̄ror Alamgīr had forgiven Rao Bhao of Būndi, Chattar Sāl's son and successor, whom the emperor had persecuted, hating him for the sake of his fallen father. Now he had even appointed the Rao—renowned for his pious deeds—to be governor of Aurangabād.

I will not forget that.

Once Aurangzeb loved. I know it. I know that he once shed tears—at the death of Zainabādi. She who stole with song and the playfulness of love into his heart—into his heart's most secret chamber. She who enticed him to drink wine—only to see if he would do even that for her sake—who could make him forget all except herself for a few fleeting hours—

I will remember Zainabādi.

My father is ill. One day he will die. But now

I can no longer give elephants away ; nor can I liberate slaves who might take his illness away with them. Nor would I wish to do so. For now I look upon Death as a liberator of souls.

My brother Aurangzeb has often written to my father : he does not like to know that the people speak of his hardness of heart. The old emperor can forget much, but he can never forgive the way in which Dārā's bloody head was sent him, and afterwards buried opposite the castle in the Tāj Mahāl—for bitter remembrance. And Aurangzeb does not get the crown jewels for which he is always asking.

I recollect how, in Fathpur, I thought of the blood-stained footprints which the descendants of Timūr left behind in Hind. Ah, how much more bloody they have become since then !

Many hundred years ago Muhammed Tughlak ruled in Delhi and struck terror into his subjects' hearts, for he committed many a bloody crime against them. His successor Firoz Shāh trembled to think of the judgment which would be meted out to Muhammed, on the day of resurrection, for all the evil he had done. Therefore he showed as much kindness as possible to the surviving relations of Muhammed Tughlak's victims and got them to sign a declaration of forgiveness which was put into Muhammed's

sepulchral vault to be his defence on the last day.

It is there still.

If ever I get out of prison and the new emperor asks for my advice, I—to whom his many victims were near and dear—will help him to try and expiate his crimes. I will strive to withhold his hand from all this shedding of blood in order to gain more land, and from destroying the Hindu sanctuaries, as if they were fortifications of the Fiend. For it is from the mount of Illumination and not from the powers of destruction that victorious Islām should emanate.

And I would fain confer on him a gift to carry with him through the realms of horror—something that might help him to rise out of them.

What might he not have become, this prince of keen intelligence, of indefatigable perseverance, if only he had had another heart! For I see glimpses of goodness in his soul, glimpses of silent unfathomable repentance, and on these glimpses I will try to build something like sisterly love.

My father is dead. The spark has gone out in this world, to be kindled again in the unseen. Now he has been carried down to the white palace, where my mother is waiting for him. In the evening the light will burn in the Tāj

Mahāl for them both, and for both the Korān will be read.

Now I am writing the last lines of this record, which has been like a friend to me in my captivity. And I remember the Emperor Bābur's words :

"I have found no faithful friend in the world except my own soul,

Except my own heart, I have no trusty confidant."

Some day, perhaps—when the Jasmine tower has fallen into ruins—this writing will be found amongst the crumbling stones.

With rich brocades and costly carpets I have decked the mosque in which my brother stopped on his way to the Tāj Mahāl. And now I am making ready to go and meet him in this fortress, carrying a golden bowl full of the gems for which he begged so long, with the forgiveness he sought in vain to obtain from our father. In a letter that I myself have written I have interpreted the dying emperor's last greeting to his son in my own language.

I will anoint my head with the essence of violets and rub my limbs with oil of jessamine. Then I will put on a white Sāri and meet my brother, to celebrate a holy day of reconciliation.

A different cup from the one given to my father's descendants in the fortress of Gwalior to kill

every mental power, has been given me to kill every kind of hatred and desire. The name of the goblet from which I have had to drink is Sorrow. From me my brother Aurangzeb has nothing more to fear.

Nor am I going to die of poison administered either by my brother or myself. Silence will reign around me. Peace and rest I will give to those who seek me—as if they sought peace by a tomb, where roses still exhale their fragrance round the marble edging.

As the women of Hind put their burning lamps to float in the river in honour of their divinity at the autumnal festival, so will I let the flame of my soul glide passively on the river of Time, in the current of the Divine Will.

And one thing I know, even if all worldly wisdom is vain: there exists in the universe a fountain of grace that never runs dry, a sun-fount of love that keeps the world alive. It is the source of all great miracles. And what is the removal of a mountain compared with the transformation of a human soul?

Thus ends the Princess's narrative.

History tells us that the Emperor Alamgīr took his sister Jahānarā with him to Delhi, gave her back her title of Pādshāh Begam and allowed

her to live in her own palace. But Roshanārā soon fell into disgrace.

When Pādshāh Begam died in 1680 the emperor, who was on his way to wage war against Mewar, commanded that a halt should be made for three days to honour her memory—a testimony to the truth of what history says of her, that she was “loved by all.”

For she was noble and beautiful, loving and generous, witty and truthful. After the death of Jahānarā a darker period in Aurangzeb’s reign sets in. The Princess had warned him against warring with the Rāna of Mewar.

He had alienated the Rajputs for all time ; and the endless wars in the Dekhan—a continued succession of victories and defeats—drained the life-blood of the empire.

Light is thrown upon the last decades of his long reign by a letter which Rāna Rāja Rai Sing in Mewar wrote to the sovereign, immediately after the tax on infidels (the jizya) had been introduced in 1681. First Akbar and his government are praised in the highest terms ; after that Jahāngīr and Shāhjahān receive their share of grateful homage. When the turn comes to Aurangzeb the tone of the letter changes.

The Rāna tells how tributary fortresses and countries have been detached from the empire,

because devastation and pillage, sanctioned by the highest authority, belong to the order of the day. Further he complains that every province of the empire is getting impoverished and exclaims : " When poverty has reached the abode of the sovereign and the princes, what will be the condition of the nobleman ? " The soldiers grumble, the merchants groan, the Muhammedans are ill-pleased, the Hindus are destitute of everything—and multitudes of people who lack the barest necessities, drag out their lives in rage and despair.

The letter goes on to say that the emperor forgets that he has the honour of belonging to the renowned house of Timūr, when he lays heavy taxes on brahmins, yogis, sannyāsis—extending his power to the peaceful anchorite.

" If your Majesty believes in the books which are called divine by reason of their excellence, these teach you that God is the God of all mankind and not only of the Muhammedans The difference in colour of people's skins is his decree. . . . To revile the religion or the customs of others is to set at naught the will of the Almighty. . . .

" The poet was right when he said ' let no one scrutinise, in order to condemn, the different manifestations of the Almighty ! ' "

The Afghan poet and chieftain Khushshāl, persecuted by Aurangzeb, says of the emperor in a poem :

. . . . no one can trust him.

He is malignant and false and a breaker of his word.

He himself said at the end of his life : " All the misery that will come after me is my own fault."

And twelve years after his death the last of his direct descendants on the throne was murdered. With Aurangzeb the era of the great Moguls in India came to an end.

Like a final chord closing their illustrious period are the words of a letter written by the emperor himself to his son Azīm :

" A foreigner I came into this world and a foreigner I leave it. I know nothing about myself, who I am or to what I am predestined. The moment which passed in power has only left sorrow behind. I did not become the guardian and protector of the empire. My precious time has been spent in vain. In my own abode I had a patron (the conscience), but my dim sight could not absorb the brilliance of his light. . . .

" Come what may, I have launched my vessel on the waves.

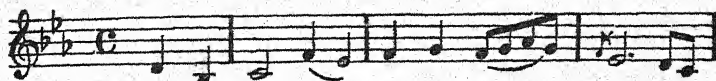
" Farewell ! Farewell ! Farewell ! "

RAG DURBARI.

Reduced to European notation by Professor Maheboob Khan of Baroda.

Andante.

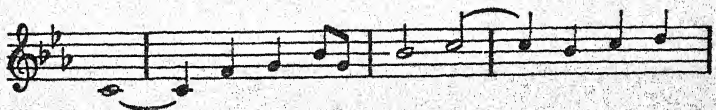
TAN SEN.



Me bha - ro - se a - pa - ne Ra - ma -



ke - - - Aw - ra na - hin - - - ka - chu ka - - - ma -



ke Jo cha - - - - - hai so de - la pa - -



- - da - - - - - ra - tha An - la de - - - - - la su - kha



dha - ma - ke Me bha - ro - se a - pa - ne



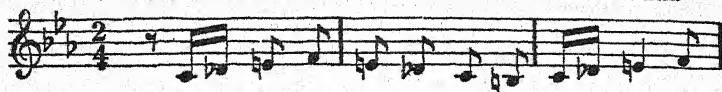
Ra - - ma - - ke - - - - -

RAG KALINGRA. BHAJAN.

Reduced to European notation by Professor Maheboob Khan of Baroda.

*Moderato.*²

MIRA BAI.



Sa -- dhu vai - ra - gan thai - ne phari Shun, Ra



na - ji a - mo Sa -- dhu vai --- ra - gan thai - ne



pha - ri shun, Ra -- na --- ji a - mo Bha - ga - wa Was - la - ra



dha - ri - la na - ma dhya - na Prabhu ---- nu



dha - ri Shun Ra --- na ji a - mo Sa dhu vai -



ra -- gan thai - ne pha - ri Shun Ra - na - - ji a - mo.

² Concerning Bhajan, Maheboob Khan writes : In accordance with the raga's Indian rule the clef ought to be be Db Ab As.

RAG DURBARI.

TAN SEN.

Free Translation from an Indian dialect.

In Rāma alone I put my trust,
To nothing else inclines my heart.
All he wishes to give I get,
From the Home of Love he brings his gifts,
In Rāma alone I put my trust.

BHAJAN.

MIRA BHAI.

Free Translation from an Indian dialect.

The passionless comes to Thee.
Listen, O King, to me !
The Lord's name is my staff,
In the Lord my soul is merged.
Listen, O King, to me !
The passionless comes to Thee.
Listen, O King, to me !

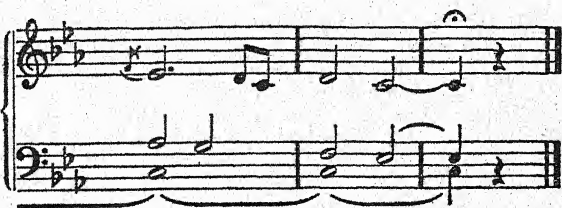
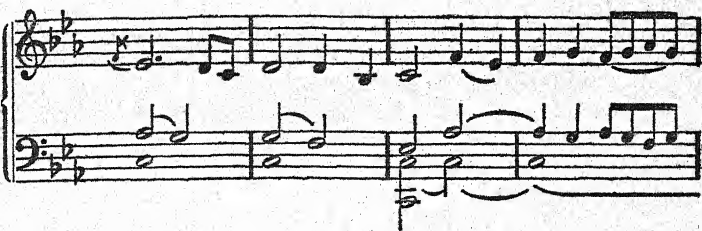
RAG DURBARI.

Adapted for piano by Nils Larsen.

Andante.

TAN SEN.





RAG KALINGRA. BHAJAN.

Adapted for piano by Nils Larsen.

Moderato.

MIRA BAL





EXPLANATIONS.

Page 1. *The Chishtis*. The saints of the Chisht family were followers of Sufism, a Muhammedan sect, which in its mystical pantheism contains many leading thoughts both of neo-platonic and Indian philosophy, and which counts amongst its adepts the most eminent Persian poets.

Page 2. *Saman Burj*. "The Jasmine Tower"—with a suite of rooms built for Nūr Mahāl, the Queen of Jahāngīr. It afterwards belonged to the harem of Shāhjahān.

Page 7. By his queen Arjamand (Mumtāz Mahāl) Shāhjahān had eight children spoken of in history. Besides Jahānārā and Roshanārā there were two other daughters, and the sons Dārā Shakōh, Shāh Shujā, Aurangzeb and Mūrād. Shāh Shujā was the first to stir up rebellion during the illness of Shāhjahān in 1657. After he had been defeated the struggle for the throne was carried on between the vice-regent Dārā on one side and Aurangzeb and Mūrād on the other.

Page 10. *Anguri Bāgh*. The name of the zenāna garden in the fortress of Agra.—*Divān-i-Am*. The big throne room in which the Mogul emperors held their receptions every day with great pomp and where an orchestra played at certain hours of the day and night.

Page 11. *Mahāl*. Here the same as harem or zenāna.

Page 14. *Rakhibandbhāi*. "The bracelet-bound brother." In Rajputāna the Rakhi feast is celebrated in the Spring, and then the ladies—especially the married ones—may choose a brother of adoption. The token is a bracelet of silk, of gold or of jewels, and he is bound to defend her, even if it should cost his life, without, in most cases, even having seen his "sister." The present she receives in return is a bodice—*kachli*—of silk or of golden brocade and pearls. The widow of Rāna Sanga of Mewar chose the Emperor Humayūn, the father of Akbar the Great, to be her warrior-brother, and he faithfully fulfilled his duties towards her.

Page 15. *Rājasthan* is the same as Rajputāna, a group of independent feudal states in North-Western and Central India. The Rajputs consider themselves as descended from the old warrior caste and trace their pedigree from the heroes in prehistoric ages. Amongst these states Mewar with its present

capital Udaipur (before it was Chitor) is especially representative. During the time of the great Moguls the Rajputs distinguished themselves in a high degree, and to this day they still retain some of the best qualities of ancient India. The mother and grandmother of Shāhjahān were both princesses from Rājasthan.—The *King of Ajmir and Delhi* was the renowned Prithvi Rāja who lived in the twelfth century and was celebrated in song by his bard, Chand. His kingdom was rajput like that of Kanauj.

Page 16. *The funeral pyre*. The Hindu woman is spoken of here as *sati* when she mounts the burning pyre to follow her husband into the next life and to expiate his sins. This custom was followed nearly until our time, and abolished by the English.—*Samsāra*. The round of re-birth.

Page 20. *Sakha*. Plunder and destruction in war.—*Salūmbra*, one of the chief feudal states of Mewar.

Page 21. *Krishna* and *Rāma*. The heroes in the two great Indian epic poems, the Mahabhārata and Ramāyana. Both were incarnations of the god Vishnu.—*Mahavīra*. The divine prophet of the Jains.—*Gouri*. The Lotus Queen, who symbolises life and death. The consort of Śiva.—*Chāran*. So the Rajputs call their bards, to whom they often show greater respect than to their brahmins.—*Jauhar*. When the women in war give themselves up to the flames rather than fall into the hands of the enemy.—*Alauddīn Khilji*. Muhammedan king of Delhi. He took the fort of Chitor in 1303.

Page 24. *Svayamvara*. The ceremony during which an Indian princess in olden times chose her husband amongst her royal suitors.

Page 29. *Darbar*. Large royal reception.

Page 30. *Shāhjahānabad*. Another name for Delhi in the time of Shāhjahān.—*Sarāi*. Hostel for caravans.

Page 31. *Mansabdār*. Officer of high rank.—*Amir*. Muhammedan dignitary of the highest aristocracy.

Page 32. *Nazir*. First bailiff.

Page 39. *Nūr Mahāl*. The Emperor Jahāngir's consort.—*Sāri*. Indian ladies' dress.

Page 44. *Hayāt Baksh Bāgh*. The life-giving garden—in Mogul taste.

Page 47. *Khilat*. Coat of silk or other thin stuff.

Page 50. *Hūrī*. Fairy in paradise.

Page 51. *Mahtab Bāgh*. "The moonlight garden"—intended by the Rajputs to be walked in by night. The flowers ought to be white and odoriferous.—In the gardens of the Moguls there were recesses for glass lanterns in different colours behind the small artificial waterfalls, which flowed down into the canals.

Page 56. *Zul Hajj*. October, 1657.—*Mere Allāh*.—My God.

Page 58. *Shāh Buland Ikbāl*. The honorary title of the Prince Dārā Shakōh as Crown Prince.

Page 58. *Āyā tākht, Yā tābūt*. The throne or the grave.

Page 59. *Kāfir, rāfizi*. Heretic, blasphemer.—The trees on the road from Agra to Delhi were planted by the Emperor Jahāngir.—One *kos* is two English miles.

Page 61. *Muazzam Khan*. "The greatest of the great"—Bhagnāgar was the old name for Haidarābad.—*The wonderful diamond*, which was cut by the Venetian Bronzoni at the court of Shāhjahān, is considered to be the historically renowned Kohinūr.

Page 64. *Zamzam* and *Kausar*.—The first of these springs has its source in Mecca, the other in Paradise.

Page 65. *Dīn Ilāhī*.—"Belief in God." This order, founded by Akbar, had like the Sanga of Buddha, four ways, and was a revival of millennial Indian tradition dating from the times when the people of India, of all sects, assembled round one idea under their own kings.

Page 67. *Merū*.—In Hindu mythology Mount Merū stands with its holy tree, which afterwards became a temple, its spring—and the rivers emerging from it—in *Ida-varsha*, the paradise of the Hindus.

Page 68. *Mullā*.—Muhammedan learned in theology and sacred law.

Page 70. *Jharōka window*. A window at which the Moguls showed themselves to their subjects.

Page 71. *Nerbadda*. The river which separates the Dekhan from the north of India.

Page 72. *Zuhār*. The noon-day prayer.—*Abdul Ariz*. The King of Bokhara.—*Rajab*. April (1658).—*Yā Allāh! teri razā*. O God! Thy will be done!

Page 74. *Jins*. Spirits in the Arabian world of imagination. They can be both good and bad. The latter try to penetrate into the constellations to hear what is said in heaven.—*To kiss the threshold*. Term for imperial audience.

Page 76. *Fathpur Sikri* means the city of victory.

Page 79. *From the time of the imām*. Unlike the orthodox Muslims Akbar wished to see *his* men walk in festive attire to the service in the mosques.—*Liwān*. The Church proper in a mosque.

Page 80. *Firangistan*. Europe.—*Mihrāb*, recess for praying in.

Page 81. *Allāhu Akbar*. God is great.—"For divine grace," etc. From Akbar's maxims.

Page 84. *Tauhid-i-Ilāhī*. Divine monotheism. Akbar's faith.

Page 85. *The King's Gate*. The southern entrance to the Masjid.—*Mahāl-i-Khās*. Ground for private buildings.—*Kwābgāh*. The house of dreams.

Page 86. *The holy finger*. The forefinger.

Page 86. *Surmā*. A black powder, with which oriental ladies blackened their eyelids to enhance the brilliancy of the eyes.—Nine months after Akbar had gone to see the hermit Salīm Chishtī in his holy cave in Fathpur, his first son—to survive—was born (later the Emperor Jahāngīr), and named after the saint.

Page 89. *Tan Sen*. A renowned Indian composer at Akbar's court. "Such singing" Abul Fazl says of him, "has not been heard in Hindustan for a thousand years."—*Mira Bai*, who lived in the fifteenth century, is worshipped to this day as a saint by a certain Krishna sect. As a poetess, too, she acquired great renown in India.—*Gopī*. Shepherdess. In *Religions of India* (a book which can no longer be obtained in the original language) the Frenchman A. Barth gives a good survey of the Krishna religion.—*Avatār*. Term for the incarnation of gods in human bodies.

Page 90. *The Pachisi-court*. This court was chequered like a chessboard.

Page 91. The Vishnu pillar which is often seen in Indian architecture, symbolizes the cosmic power, imagined as a tree holding up the world. Sometimes the capital takes the form of the fruit of the holy lotus-flowers, emblem of "the throne and footstool of the Gods." Vishnu represents the sun at noon.

Page 92. "His whole demeanour and his habits were quite different from those of other people, and his face shone with divine dignity," the Emperor Jahāngīr says of his father in his memoirs.—*Grāmānī*. Village bailiff.—*Jizya*. The tax the Muhammedan sovereigns imposed upon "infidels."

Page 95. *Buddha's Sanga*. "The outline drawing of the Panch Mahāl is like the plan of a buddhist vihāra." (E. W. Smith, *Archæological Survey of India*.) Scholars now suppose that this building may have been the chapter-house of the Dīn Ilāhī order.

Page 97. *Ajantā*. The Buddhist painting was of fundamental significance for all later Indian painting. The best preserved examples of this painting are to be seen in the Ajantā caves.

Page 99. *Sar-i-Asrar*. This was the name Dārā Shakōh gave to the collection of fifty upanishads which he set pandits from Benares to translate into Persian in 1656, and which Anquetil

Duperron translated into Latin in 1801 under the name of Oupnekhat.—A translation by myself from the Sanskrit of the Kāthakāupanishad is published by Norstedt & Söner, Stockholm.—Akbar was elected the mujtahid, that is the spiritual leader of the empire.

Page 100. *Ulāmā*. Scribe.—*Idābat Khāna*. The hall in which priests and learned men in every religion assembled on Thursday nights round the Pādishāh to exchange opinions.

Page 102. *Zagatai*. The part of Transoxiana from which Chengiz Khan and Timūr Beg came.—*The golden host*. The royal family of Chengiz' descendants was thus styled. As an instance of the mixture of simplicity and magnificence at their court we may record that mutton and mare's milk were served at their festivities, but waggon-loads of gold and silver were distributed amongst the masses.

Page 104. *The Bauli-houses*. House for water reservoirs.—*Maryam-uz-Zamāni*. The consort of Akbar who was the mother of Jahāngir. The name signifies the Virgin Mary of the time. She was a princess of Rājasthan, daughter of Rājā Bāhāra-Mal. None of Akbar's sons, born earlier, had survived.

Page 105. *The small palace*. As far as one can judge it is the building now called the house of Rājā Birbal.

Page 106. *The interrupted service* in the mosque. One day the Emperor himself began to read the Friday prayer in the liwān. But suddenly he broke off and let someone else continue.—*Sohnahrā Makān*. The golden house.

Page 107. *The Virgin Mary of the Time*. Maryam-uz-Zamāni. "It has been said that there were five thousand women in all." The Mogul sovereigns in India seem to have shown their female relatives great consideration. As soon as the Emperor Bābur had gained a firm footing in his new kingdom he sent letters in all directions to relatives and to persons in any way connected with his ancestors, asking them to follow him. About ninety female relations obeyed the summons.

Page 109. *Kinkhob*. Rich silk brocade.

Page 109. *Daswant*. The most eminent of the painters in Akbar's school. Hindu.

Page 114. *Nazir-i-Khusrau*. Mystical poet, who lived in Persia during the eleventh century. Akbar liked his poems. "Original, learned, sincere, enthusiastic, full of faith, without fear, disdaining flatterers and fortune-hunters and perhaps with more courage than can be traced in any other Persian poet." (E. Browne, *A Literary History of Persia*.)

Page 119. "*Rise like Muhammed*," etc. Quotation from the Korān.

Page 121. *The pilgrims in the sanctuary*. In spite of all dissensions concerning their faith, Hindus and Muslims have always gone on pilgrimages to each other's holy places in India. To this day, as in the time of Shāhjahān, believers of both religions—even from distant parts—throng round Salīm Chishtī's grave to say their prayers there.

Page 121. *Shāyishā Khan and Khalilullah Khan*. There was a rumour that the Shāh had improper relations with the wives of these men.

Page 123. *Kāma*. The god of love. The Hindu book must be the "*Harsha Charita*" of Bāna, written in the seventh century A.D.—*Jalla Jallāluhū*. "*May his glory be glorified*." This greeting was introduced by Akbar and was used in his time, perhaps not without an illusion to his own name, Jalālu-d-dīn Muhammed Akbar.

Page 126. *The empire of the Mauryas* was founded in 321 B.C., after Alexander's raid on Hindustan. Harsha reigned during the seventh century A.D.

Page 127. *Abū*. According to legend the old kshatriya (warrior) race was regenerated on Mount Abu through the agency of the gods. The four so-called Agnikula tribes were summoned forth out of a fiery pit: the Chohan—the foremost of them and of all Rajput tribes—being summoned by the god Vishnu. Historically the Chohans cannot be traced further back than the seventh century A.D. The Agnikulas are spoken of as tall, of fair complexion, and with prominent features, like those of the Parthian kings (Colonel Tod).

Page 129. *Saffron and blood*. When the Rajputs dressed in saffron-colour it was for "*victory or death*."

Page 130. *Chohan*. The Hara tribes are descendants of the Chohans.—*Muhammed of Ghor*, or Shahāb-ud-dīn. The last decisive fight with the king of Delhi—also called Pādishāh—took place in 1193.

Page 131. During Akbar's time it was customary to wear a "*rakhi*"—linen rags wound round the wrist—as an amulet.

Page 134. *Nauroza*. A market held at the court of the Moguls, where the ladies of the court and beautiful women from the whole kingdom sold wares which were bought by the emperor alone.

Page 139. *Aryavarta*. The part of India which was subjugated by the Aryas.

Page 148. *Tāj Mahāl*. Pictures of the Tāj Mahāl are to be found in my poem of the same name, published by Norstedt & Söner, 1894.

Page 149. *The jasper walls of the Hall of Mirrors.* The rooms where, we are told, Shāhjahān celebrated his erotic orgies. As long as Arjamand Banu Begam lived no other woman existed for him. Immediately after her death he wished to become a dervish.

Page 152. *The marble floor.* Tāj Mahāl, wholly built of white marble, stands on a plinth of the same stone.

Page 154. *Māya.* The Hindu expression for the world-illusion.

Page 155. *The red mosques.* On either side of the Tāj Mahāl stands a beautifully proportioned little mosque of red sandstone.

Page 157. "*When your swords,*" etc. Quotation from Ansari.—"*The air was cut,*" etc. Quotation from Chand.

Page 159. *Shabān.* The end of May.

Page 161. *Ramazān.* June.

Page 163. *Loosen the chains.* In Indian warfare of those days the big guns were fastened together with chains in order to prevent the enemy's cavalry from riding between them and killing the gunners.

Page 164. *The camels carried swivel-guns.—Firangi.* A European.

Page 167. *Sultan Muhammed.* Aurangzeb's eldest son.

Page 169. *Svayamdharma.* Feudal duty.

Page 189. *Jamādā'l Awwal.* February (1659).

Page 192. *Nādira Begam* was the granddaughter of a son of Akbar the Great.

Page 193. *Howdah.* The seat on an elephant's back.

Page 200. *Alamgīr.* The name Aurangzeb adopted when he ascended the throne.

Page 203. *Shāhjahān* died in January, 1666.

Page 206. *Pādshāh Begam.* Empress amongst princesses.

